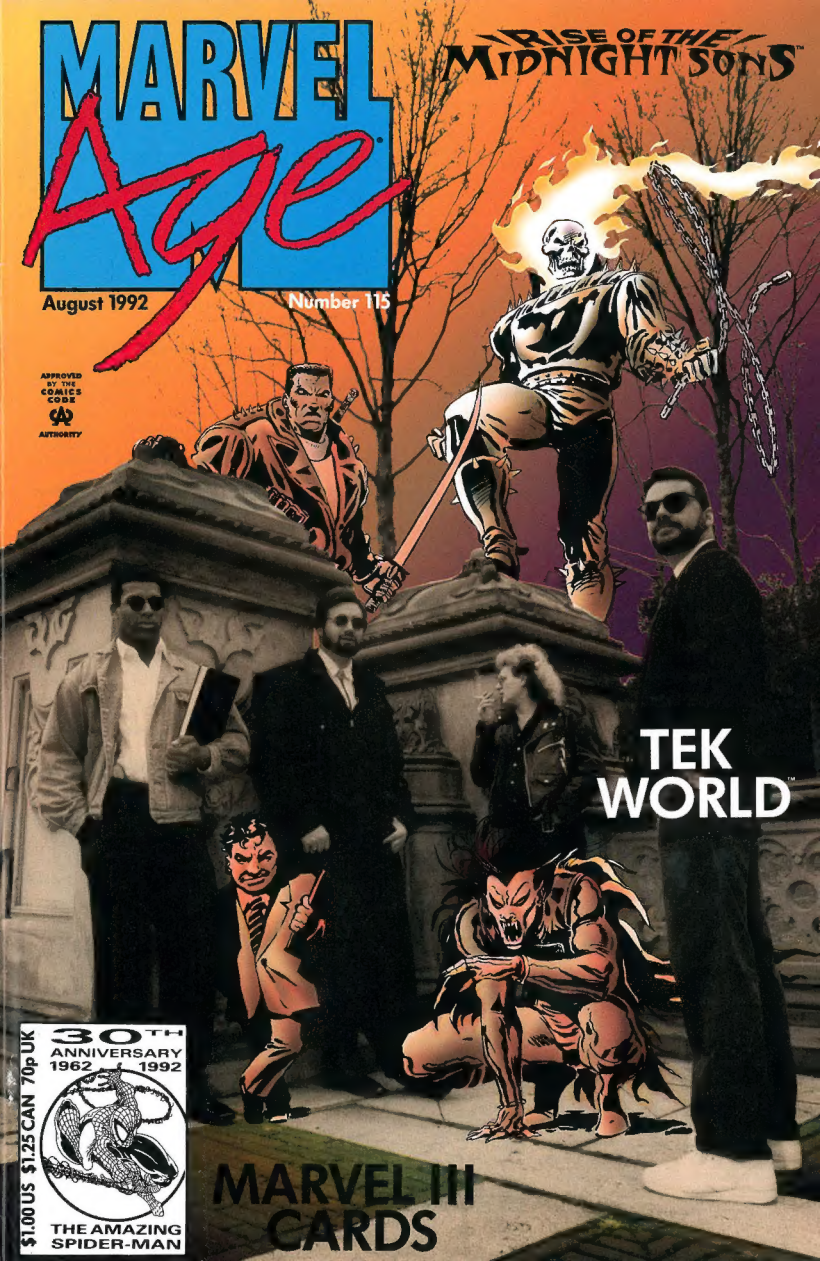
MARVEL Age
August 1992
Number 115
RISE OF THE MIDNIGHT SONS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TEK WORLD
30TH ANNIVERSARY 1962 1992
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
$1.00 US $1.25 CAN 70p UK
MARVEL III CARDS

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Tougher than balancing the budget. . . .

This year, the politicians don't have to live up to their promises until after November 2.

If then. We don't have that luxury. We have to start paying off right now, because this is the inaugural issue of the *new* **MARVEL AGE**, as promised.

We're going to have more style. We're going to have more substance. We're going to experiment and, occasionally, we're going land flat on our four-color behinds. That's because, as the old adage points out, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

The Marvel Universe is an amazing place, where excitement and change are tools of the trade. Folks like Tom DeFalco, Paul Ryan, Mark Gruenwald, George Perez, Rick Parker, Joey Cavaleri, Andy Kubert, Fred Hembeck and Stan Lee will join us in our explorations. Folks like you will let us know how we're doing, and what else you'd like to see in **MARVEL AGE**.

This issue explores the genesis of one of the most ambitious projects of 1992 — **The Rise of the Midnight Sons.** Built on the foundation of **GHOST RIDER**, there will be five new titles produced by super-editor Bobbie Chase that represent a major foray into the world of the macabre. Our ambitious round table interview with the Midnight Sons writers delves into the occult process of *creating* such a dramatic sub-universe. As icing on the cake, we have the horror master himself — Clive Barker — discussing the future of horror in comics.

There's plenty for you non-horrific folks, with **TEKWORLD**, the Marvel Universe III Trading Cards, Toy Fair and **DIGITEK**, the latest offering from **Marvel UK.** In coming months, we'll have behind-the-scenes examinations of the X-Men comic book and cartoon adventures, the creation of the **Marvel 2099** universe, what's in store for **THE INCREDIBLE HULK, IRON MAN'S** 30th anniversary and our own celebration as **MARVEL AGE** marks the beginning of its second decade.

With all that promised, we'd best get this show on the road.

While I have your attention, I'd like to apologize to Suzanne Gaffney for the byline accidentally left off of "Launching a Second Decade of Epic Comics" in **MARVEL AGE #113.** She did a great job on a challenging feature, and will be back in issue #116 with the scoop on this Fall's animated **X-MEN** television series.

— Steve Saffel
Editor

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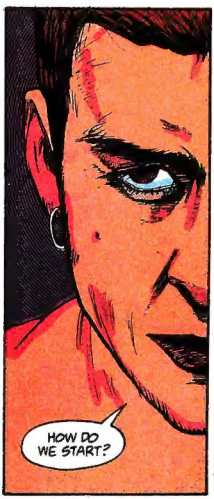
Up Front

ITEM! To celebrate Spider-Man's 30th Anniversary, Marvel will be releasing a special anniversary poster of the web-slinger and and his lovely wife, Mary Jane, toasting each other over a glass of champagne. Managing Editor Glenn Herdling, said that when he first saw the layout for the poster, he immediately knew he wanted to do it. "I thought 'wow,'" Glenn said, "'this sure looks like they're celebrating an anniversary to me.'" Painted by pinup favorite Ken Steacy, who will also be drawing a Wolverine poster due out sometime later this year, the Spider-Man and Mary Jane poster will be released this summer, just in time for Spidey fans everywhere to wish their favorite wall-crawler a happy 30th birthday.

HELLRAISER HELLRAISER HELLRAISER HELLRAISER

ITEM! Horror fans will be glad to hear that their favorite forum of frightening fables, **CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER**, won't be taking a summer vacation. The 64 page **HELLRAISER SUMMER SPECIAL** is an all-new collection of terrifying tales presented in an all-new way. **HELLRAISER** Editor Marcus McClaurin explains: "The **HELLRAISER** series has always been an anthology of unrelated stories; what we're doing in the **SUMMER SPECIAL** is having a single plot thread tie the stories together in a unified way. It's a new step for **HELLRAISER**."

The single thread tying the three stories together is a "framing sequence," a separate story with its own beginning, middle, and end. Written by D.G. Chichester (**TERROR, INC.**, **DAREDEVIL**), it begins in a bizarre and twisted classroom in a mysterious school. A nervous new substitute teacher asks the children to do an oral presentation on what they did on their summer vacation. What she gets is, as McClaurin puts it, "three horrible, hair-wrenching tales from the **HELLRAISER** archives."



The first story, "Babycakes," by Fay Perozich is a disturbing account of a desperate woman unable to bear a child, so she turns to the Cenobites to help her conceive a child from hell. The second story, "The Devils Absolution," by R.J.M. Lofficier shows the daughter of a mob boss who gets involved with the legions of Leviathan. When her father finds out, he sends his gun-slinging mobsters to fight the Cenobites for his daughter's soul. The last story is, "To My Son," by Frank Lovece, a touching and upsetting tale of a loving, out-of-work father who is willing to do anything to insure his son's future.

"The **SUMMER SPECIAL** is great for people who've never picked up a **HELLRAISER** book before," says McClaurin. "It gives them an introduction to the **HELLRAISER** world with three stories that are really the cream of the crop." The **HELLRAISER SUMMER SPECIAL** due out in July is the first "season specific" anthology of **HELLRAISER** stories. Later this year, the **HELLRAISER HOLIDAY SPECIAL**, featuring three tales of holiday horrors, will continue this new direction.

CITIZEN KANG

ITEM! Having just saved the world from certain destruction in the bloody, galaxy-spanning conflict known as, Operation Galactic Storm, the Avengers return home only to find the Earth again in imminent peril at the hands of one of their oldest and deadliest foes, Kang. "Citizen Kang" is a four part crossover story taking place in this summer's **CAPTAIN AMERICA, THOR, FANTASTIC FOUR** and **AVENGERS** annuals, pitting these heroes against the evil time-traveling tyrant from the future.

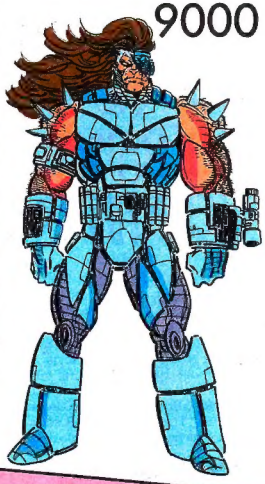
Parts one and two will be written by Mark Gruenwald (**CAPTAIN AMERICA, QUASAR**) and parts three and four Roy Thomas (**AVENGERS WEST COAST, DR. STRANGE, CONAN**). Gruenwald is very excited about this project. "Kang's a character that had been retired for ten years," says Gruenwald. "This is a chance to re-establish him as the Avengers deadliest villain, as their Dr. Doom."

Part one, in **CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11**, begins with Cap searching for the Vision, who has mysteriously disappeared. Cap's search leads him to Kang's 20th century headquarters: a monstrous citadel known as Chronopolis. Built by Kang, Chronopolis is a city existing simultaneously in different periods of time. Each street in this bizarre metropolis is a different place in time. Beginning in ancient Babylon, Captain America must battle his way through history one city block at a time before reaching Kang's stronghold in the heart of the sprawling complex.

Part two, in **THOR ANNUAL #17**, has the God of Thunder also arriving in Chronopolis in search of the now missing Captain America. Landing in a different part of the city, Thor is surrounded by 10th century Vikings worshipping him as their god.

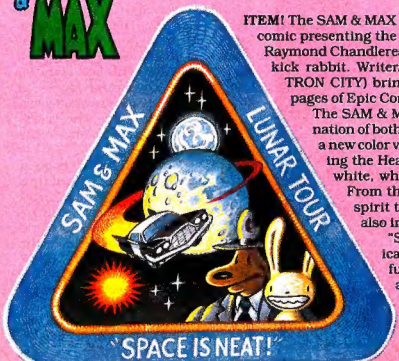
FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #25 sees the FF battle the Avengers, who they think have been brainwashed by Kang. The story concludes in **AVENGERS ANNUAL #21** unfolds the climactic battle with the Avengers and the Fantastic Four versus The Seven Centurians of Time, Kang's personal guard of the seven mightiest warriors to ever live, past, present and future. In addition, fans of the Vision will learn the untold story behind his mysterious origin. Hitting the newsstands in July, "Citizen Kang" promises to be one of the most eagerly awaited crossovers of the season.

DEATH HUNT 9000



SAM & MAX

MONKEY S VIOLATING THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE



ITEM! The SAM & MAX SPECIAL COLOR COLLECTION is a 64 page bookshelf comic presenting the lunatic adventures of Sam, a hard-nosed 1940's-style, Raymond Chandleresque private eye dog and Max, his faithful, cuddly, side-kick rabbit. Writer/creator/artist Steve Purcell (DEFENDERS OF DYNA-TRON CITY) brings his comical cult-classic crime-fighting duo to the pages of Epic Comics with stories appearing in color for the first time.

The SAM & MAX SPECIAL COLOR COLLECTION features a combination of both old and new SAM & MAX tales. Long-time fans will enjoy a new color version of the classic SAM & MAX yarn, "Monkeys Violating the Heavenly Temple," previously only available in black-and-white, while fans new and old will get a laugh from, "The Beast From the Cereal Aisle," a whimsical tale about a disembodied spirit trapped inside a cereal box. In addition, the special will also include several original pinup pictures by Purcell.

"Steve has a unique way of satirizing things that are typically American; popular culture, eating habits etc., in a funny way," says SAM &MAX editor, Nel Yomtov. "He has a very gentle sense of humor; it's very lighthearted and never demeaning." The SAM & MAX SPECIAL COLOR COLLECTION will be available in July from Epic.

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KID 'N PLAY

Photograph by Christopher Ebel

Under the watchful eye of the **MTV** cameras, Kid and Wiz get a special guided tour through the making of the **KID 'N PLAY** comics.

ITEM! Friday the 13th may be a scary day for some people, but for all the folks in the Marvel editorial offices, Friday, March 13 was a frighteningly thrilling day thanks to an exciting visit by Kid, co-star of the movies **HOUSE PARTY**, **HOUSE PARTY II** and currently featured in Marvel's own **KID 'N PLAY** comic book.

Usually side-by-side with his partner, Play, the solo Kid brought along his deejay, Wiz, for a special guided tour to see how comics are made. Accompanied by a cameraman to videotape their visit for Kid and Play's **MTV** program, "Like We Care," their first stop was the office of **KID 'N PLAY** editor, Fabian Nicieza. Once there, Kid and Wiz met with the writer and penciler of the **KID 'N PLAY** comic, Dwight D. Coye and Chuck Frazier. "We showed them step-by-step how the book is made," said Dwight Coye, "they'd never seen it before and were very interested to see the process firsthand."

Kid and Wiz were then personally escorted around the Marvel editorial offices by **KID 'N PLAY** assistant editor, Evan Skolnick. "It was really exciting to meet them", Evan said, "we've talked on the phone before but this was the first time we've met in person." Evan showed the guys around the production area to see the **Mighty Marvel Bullpen** in action.

According to Dwight Coye, Wiz was especially thrilled by the experience. "Wiz is a comics fan from way back," Dwight said, "while we were posing for a picture in front of the bulletin board showing the covers of all the current issues, Wiz kept staring at the board and pointing to the covers saying, 'Got it, got it, need it, got it, need it.'"

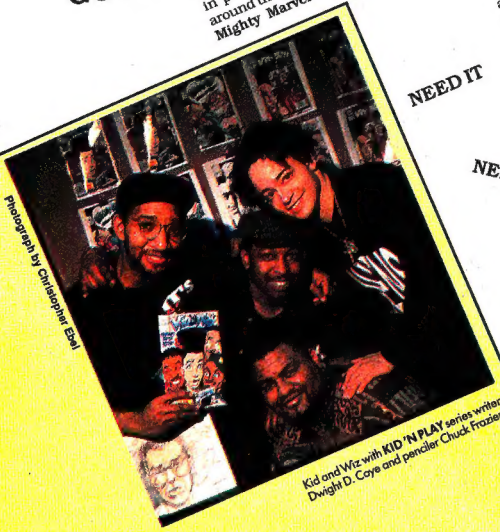
After autographing a few comics and posing for a few pictures, Kid and Wiz had to return to their **MTV** studios to finish taping their show. Before leaving, Kid, sporting a new hairstyle that will debut in the comic next month, told Dwight Coye what he thought of the **KID 'N PLAY** comic. Says Dwight, "He thought the stories were a lot of fun to read. Both the guys really get a kick out of seeing their faces in a comic every month. He said he loved it."

GOT IT

GOT IT

NEED IT

NEED IT



Photograph by Christopher Ebel

Kid and Wiz with **KID 'N PLAY** series writer Dwight D. Coye and penciler Chuck Frazier.

GOT IT

GOT IT

— Matt Morra

DIGITEK is the latest entry in the Marvel UK success story of **GENESIS '92**, which already includes **HELL'S ANGEL**, **WARHEADS**, **MOTORMOUTH**, and **PENDRAGON II**. A four issue limited series, it's the story of a deadly computer warrior drawn from the depths of cyberspace itself. The title will be fully painted — the first regular Marvel UK super hero book to be published in this style.

Andy Lanning whose Marvel work includes **THE SLEAZE BROTHERS**, **DREADLANDS**, the original **KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON**, and upcoming **PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL** stories, is co-writer on this book, a departure from his recent and acclaimed inking on **DEATH'S HEAD II**. "**DIGITEK** is computer action adventure with overtones of human interest," he explained, "featuring computer-generated characters. Digitek himself is an entity of cyberspace in our real world — he is walking, talking cyberspace in the form of a man."

How Digitek reached the real world ties in with **GENESIS 92**'s infamous **MyS-TECH** corporation and specifically the Warheads — mercenaries who travel across space and time finding new technologies which are then marketed as "new" inventions on Earth through dummy companies. Lanning again: "A scientist, Jonathan Bryant, is working for the Nakasone Corporation who basically develop state of the art computer technology, and are working on something stolen by a Warheads troop. When he is killed in a raid by a rival operation, he is reconstructed by Nakasone's new supercomputer to become Digitek — a digitized analog of a human being, with all the memories and personality of Bryant."

As readers might predict, being a computer construct gives him somewhat *different* powers. Lanning elaborated: "Digitek can digitate himself into any shape he wants — the physical laws that define how we operate just don't apply to him, because for him everything we can see, hear, and touch is just information. What he does is assimilate that information, discover how it works, then change it into what he wants. For example, by 'reading' electric current, he can change himself into an energy form and travel along telephone lines. His whole form can change, growing a gun from his arm, for in-

stance."

"On top of the computer construct there's this human personality template — Jonathan Bryant — which starts to surface and take control,"

added Lanning. Unfortunately for Digitek, Bryant isn't as familiar with being a computer form as he'd like and is only starting to discover the extent of his powers — which could prove fatal when more beings from cyberspace arrive on Earth intent on his destruction!

Two things really make this new addition to the Marvel Universe stand apart from its brethren. John Tomlinson, Andy Lanning's partner on the writing (and co-writer of **PENDRAGON II** with Dan Abnett) elucidates: "**DIGITEK** is the first fully painted regular Marvel UK title and it doesn't feature any traditional Marvel super heroes." What, none? Well, there is Deathlok.

John Freeman, editor on the book, explained: "Deathlok will be the major guest star of the series. Because **DIGITEK** is being published in Britain first, we wanted to use a character that would appeal to readers on both sides of the Atlantic. We already knew that Deathlok was a runaway success story in America and for us in Britain he's the sort of psychotic-looking anti-hero that has mass appeal! The added bonus to such a pairing is that Deathlok is very much locked into a computer himself, which gives him a certain affinity with **DIGITEK**."

Had there been any problems coordinating the use of **DEATHLOK** with that book's editor, Tom Brevoort? "Absolutely not. Like all the **Marvel UK** books, if we're using Marvel US super heroes in them, we send the American editor an outline or advance script to check over, to make sure he's happy that the character has been used correctly before it's drawn. That's standard practice. For example, Deathlok may look psychotic, but Tom was keen that we mention that the man trapped inside the Deathlok killing machine is a pacifist. He was very helpful — to the extent of digitating some Deathlok dialoging software to us, so we could get that right, too!"

The other unique aspect to **DIGITEK** is its stunning painted artwork. Andy Lanning emphasized the point: "Fully painted means this is not black and white line art which is then colored — this is fully painted color art from the start." The man responsible for this is the young Irish artist Dermot Power, who has worked for other comic publishers, but never outside the **UK**. To Dermot, painted artwork is nothing out of the ordinary. "I've never really tried to work any other way. I started off with gouache, as it's much easier to handle with small panels, but now I use mainly acrylic paints."

The painted artwork is also the reason why **DIGITEK** is a limited series (for now) instead of an ongoing title. Freeman again: "Dermot's art is brilliant but it also takes a lot of time to complete — on average, he'll do about three pages a week. Now that means we've got to have a much longer lead-in time on the title, which is why we decided to launch it in July, rather than with the other **GENESIS '92** titles earlier this year. Our Editor-in-Chief, Paul Neary, is confident that this will be a terrific showcase for painted work, and it could mean this series will be the start of a whole new range of such titles. You could say this was an experiment — we want to see how **DIGITEK** runs, and then, if it is as successful as we think it will be, we'll consider a regular series. Both Andy Lanning and John Tomlinson have talked about using Digitek again and the limited series is just a start for this character, which has been a long time in the making."

> Digitek can digitate himself into any shape he wants — the physical laws that define how we operate just don't apply to him.

"I share a studio with John Tomlinson but I'd never actually worked with him," said Lanning. "One weekend I was watching a computer film and thought I'd like to create a computer-oriented strip. However, rather than actually going into the computer world, which seemed obvious, I thought, 'why not do it the other way and have someone do all the things which can be done in a computer in the real world.' John liked the idea and we started working it up, at which point Dermot sent some color stuff to our studio, which looked really exciting."

Tomlinson added: "We had a pretty complete plot with fabulous artwork samples by February 1990. When the idea of **GENESIS '92** was first suggested, our original Marvel editor recommended we work **DIGITEK** up into a more Marvel-style strip and slant it more towards the super hero angle. We started out with a British style episodic strip and from there it has developed into our very first fully painted color

originated super hero comic for Marvel. It's going to get a lot more exposure than we had originally dreamed of."

Editor Freeman echoes the sentiment: "**DIGITEK** will appeal to a wide audience, especially people excited by what computers are capable of, the whole idea of other worlds in cyberspace. It is very much a new idea and a new direction for Marvel comics. We've already had some very positive feedback to the work and I am very confident it will be a success."

. . .he is walking, talking cyberspace in the form of man.

—Alan Woollcombe

Stan's SOAP BOX

Hi Heroes!

Wouldja believe there was actually a time when our high-flyin' super heroes weren't Marvel's biggest sellers? In fact, during the latter part of the 50's, the number of our super hero titles was approximately zilch, but that doesn't mean we were all on vacation. Uh uh! We were busier than the Ghost Rider at a motorcycle rally, with the whole blushin' bullpen capriciously creating a maniacal menage of mixed-up "monster mags!"

I don't know what there was about monster stories, but everybody seemed to like them. At first, we cooked up some short horror yarns which we'd use as filler material in our other titles, just to leave a ghoulish taste in our readers' mouths! But then we got our big idea. . . .

If the monster strips were popular enough to scatter around in our other titles, why not devote entire magazines to them? That was fine with me. I loved writing them and dreaming up the goofy names. As a matter of fact, I'd first invent a name and then try to find a monster and a plot that would justify it.

One thing you're sure to notice about our monster titles is that they're quite a bit different from the super hero titles which followed a few years later. I mean, you can hardly compare "Doomboom, the Demon From the Purple Planet!" or "Fin Fang Foom" with Captain America's classic "If This Be Treason!" or the Silver Surfer's never-to -be-forgotten "And Who Shall Mourn For Him?" Although, I guess the "Treason" and "Mourn For Him" monikers weren't all that bad, either!

Actually, our monster titles were always a source of great amusement and insane kidding around the bullpen. Try to picture a bunch of us, sitting crowded around my tiny office, laughing uncontrollably as we tossed out title suggestions like "Vommitt, the Apparition that Swallowed Cincinnati" or "Monongaheela, the Pigeon-Toed Predator from Pensacola!" And, just between us, those were a couple of our *better* ideas!

Speaking of Fin Fang Foom, people have asked me (and I can understand why!) how I dreamed up that totally of-the-wall title. Here, for the first time in print, is the actual honest-to-Forbush skinny. . . .

Years ago, when I was about eight or ten, my dad took me to a movie called "Chu Chin Chow!" Say it to yourself. Sounds like music, right? Chances are you'll never be able to forget it either!

That's what happened to me. One day, when I was trying to dream up a new, different monster name, for some inexplicable reason I though of good ol' "Chu Chin Chow" and then, trying to create something with the some cadence, the same rhythm, came up with "Fin Fang Foom!?" See how simple it is when you know the secret!

But what about the stories themselves? How to explain their popularity in those days? Perhaps one reason was the Vietnam War. It was such an unpopular war that it seemed to be tearing the country apart. At such times, people look for escapist entertainment to take their minds off the grim reality confronting them, and it's hard to think of anything much more escapist than "Grottu, King of the Insects!"

Of course, once we had our monster, the next problem was to figure out what to do with him, or it. Usually, since our BEMs were so overgrown, their main objective was to take over a whole city, or country, or the planet itself. In fact, some of our mixed-up monsters were out to make a shambles of the entire known universe. After all, when Marvel gets going there's no stopping us!

We did, however, have some horrific creatures with more modest, though equally ghoulish, goals. Sometimes they'd just be after simple revenge, or they'd want to trade bodies with some hapless human, or perhaps do away with mankind and populate the Earth with a race of rascally robots. Then, there were ones like "What Was 'X,' the Thing that Lived?" It involved a writer of monster stories who had a slight problem. All the monsters he wrote about actually came to life. It took that nitwit scriptwriter 18 pages before he figured out that there was something magical about his typewriter and he'd have to destroy it in order to save the world! Yep, we saved the world so often that I half expected a Nobel prize!!

Actually, it was tougher writing the monster scripts than the super hero tales. The reason is, there was no continuity to the monster stories. We had to invent a new hero and/or heroine and a new monster with each new issue. Perhaps that's the reason the entire trend eventually died out. After all, how many different origins could we dream up? How many different excuses could we find for some unspeakably horrific creature to try to annihilate mankind? And even if we didn't run out of new monsters themselves, how many more names could we concoct that could match the sheer grandeur of Vandoom, Groot, The Glop, Thungadorr, ZZutak, and the never-to-be-forgotten Fin Fang Foom?

They're just a memory now, but they were great in their day. So, don't be surprised if, when you least expect it, we lay a new batch of monster on ya! Hey, this is Marvel--anything's possible; even though "Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute!"

Excelsior!

Stan

— Stan Lee

MIDNIGHT SONS

RISE OF THE

I'm not as sick and warped as Dan...

Something *EVIL* is Happening in the Marvel Universe.

SHADOWS IN YOUR ROOM LIKE A GHOST YOU EVER SEE LOOK IN TO THE ONE YOU LOVE IF YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME -"GHOST RIDER" SIMPLE MINDS

Photographs by Eliot R. Brown

Editor Bobbie Chase is the insidious mastermind behind the rise of the Midnight Sons.

Four new monthly titles are joining the immensely popular **GHOST RIDER** to form the Midnight Sons: a family of books which are anything but comic. **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE, DARKHOLD, NIGHTSTALKERS** and **MORBIUS THE LIVING VAMPIRE**. . .these are the future of horror.

MARVEL AGE recently sat down with the people behind the phantoms — Editor Bobbie Chase and writers Howard Mackie, Chris Cooper, Dan Chichester and Len Kaminski — to discuss this unique and dark genesis. . .the rise of the Midnight Sons.

MA: How and when did the concept of the Midnight Sons originate?

BC: It started from [Editor in Chief] Tom DeFalco saying, "We need another Ghost Rider book." Howard Mackie had had an idea for another Ghost Rider book; he wanted to do **BLAZE** as a second Ghost Rider title.

HM: But we decided it sounded too much like a movie about a stripper. *(laughter)*

BC: We decided that rather than come out with one more Ghost Rider title, it would make more sense to create some sort of a group, since we felt the character had enough potential. So therefore we set about trying to work a group of books that were sort of like the X-Men books — in that the characters could cross over, and it strengthens the line, and you create a Marvel Universe feel immediately within the books so that you'd have five super hero, super-horror Marvel Universe-types.

MA: So when you say "we," you basically mean you and Howard?

BC: It was a lot of people; it was Howard, it was [X-Men Editor] Bob Harras, it was me — I think that was really it. . .Bob is the one I see in my head, saying, "Bobbie, you want to have a family of books —"

HM: I think Chris Cooper was involved in it, too. We had started talking about it when we knew that they were going to want another Ghost Rider book, and we did have an idea for it. And I thought that Bobbie knew that Len wanted to do something with Morbius at that time.

BC: It was Bob and me talking — Bob said, "Use the Hannibal King [TOMB OF DRACULA] characters and then throw in some other characters from the Marvel Universe." And then someone else said, "Morbius might be fun." And then Howard suggested I talk to Len because Len had been interested in doing the Morbius —

CC: Morbius was on that list of characters, wasn't he, that Tom said, "*We're* going to do series on these —"

BC: Yes, actually Tom said he wanted to do a new Morbius series, and I said that I'd like to develop it as part of this line. And then I went to Howard and said, "Morbius is one of the ones we're thinking about." Howard said, "Well, talk to Len because I know he's interested." I asked Len, "Would you be willing to do a proposal? I've got two other people doing proposals."

Len walked down to Howard's office, walked back and put a MORBIUS proposal on my desk! *(laughter)*

HM: Yeah, I happened to know that for that particular project he had already worked up a proposal.

BC: And then the way Chris came in was that he had already put in a proposal for DARKHOLD [to the Marvel New Projects Committee] and said, "Well, I've got this thing — I know we're working together [as Editor and Assistant Editor] and you can't use it — but you should read it!"

CC: I was sitting there going crazy because I heard her on the phone talking to all these people about what she was looking for, and I was like: "That's what I handed in!" At last I said, "Bobbie, I really think you should read this."

BC: I said, "Well, we know that I can't edit it even if I wanted to. . ." And I read his proposal and I just *loved* it, and it had already been approved by the New Projects Committee. . .so I went in and begged Tom. Sold my soul to Tom, I said. "Please let us include this in the group of books."

And then Hannibal King, which had been the original concept for a sort of a third title —

DC: — Got depraved into whatever it is. *(laughter)*

BC: I guess it was about the same time that Dan had done a Ghost Rider bit in **DAREDEVIL** which I just fell in love with.

HM: So I was really pushing for Dan to get the **NIGHTSTALKERS** job, so that Bobbie couldn't fall too in love with Dan's Ghost Rider bits! *(laughter)*

DC: So it was kind of a protectionism thing you had going —

HM: I said, "Oh yeah, Dan would be *great* for this stuff over here. . .just keep him away from that Ghost Rider character!" Because Bobbie kept telling me how great Dan's Ghost Rider was; "Oh, I loved Dan's Ghost Rider bit, isn't he doing a great Ghost Rider?" *(laughter)*

BC: And then Blaze — even though **BLAZE** is still a great idea, and may still be another book — Tom really wanted a team-up book; he wanted a second Ghost Rider title. So we came up with **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE**, a team-up book with two characters. We had reintroduced Johnny Blaze into **GHOST RIDER**, every time Blaze was in the book, fan letters would increase *tenfold!* The response was really good.

MA: Can we get a little more specific about the time frame in which all this happened?

BC: We had the proposals on Tom's desk last July, which means — let me think about it. . .Christmas '90 was when we really started planning this.

HM: It WAS Christmas '90, because I remember that it was right before Christmas vacation that Bob Harras had suggested the Hannibal King idea. And we were initially trying to get Bob to do a proposal, since he was the one who loved the character. [But he whined,] "Ehhhh, I can't, I'm X-Stuff. . ." *(laughter)*

BC: We ultimately wanted to have this on Tom's desk in July, all in one package. Which we did, but everybody did a first draft, we picked the proposals. . .and then we said, "Okay, now we're going to Tom-proof them." *(laughter)*

So, everybody did rewrites. The proposals were really perfect, though . . .because they had the original concepts, then they had how the books were tied together, how we would even tie them together in the first storyline, and a couple of potential storylines. So that's how we put it together and put it on Tom's and [Executive Editor] Mark [Gruenwald]'s desks.

the three characters are completely anti-occult. They want to destroy everything demonic. . .

Tom came back to me a week later and said, "Okay, do it!" Which is inconceivable in the history of Marvel, that Tom would come back with four new book proposals and say, "Okay, do it!" It was just amazing.

MA: And the concept really hasn't changed that much from the first idea you had. . .

BC: It has not changed.

MA: Is that why you think it went through so quickly?

BC: Yeah. Tom's really left us alone. I think they loved it so much — Tom said to me that he was just wowed by it, couldn't believe it. I had even given all the first plots for all the Midnight Sons issues to Mark Gruenwald to read. No comments except, "I love it, it's wonderful." The material is so solid, nobody could screw with it!

HM: I think the other reason why it hasn't changed that much — and this maybe jumps ahead a little in the timeline of it all — when we went to our symposium, one of the astounding things for me, at least, and I've been in a few of those group meetings where you throw a whole bunch of freelance writers together and you say, "C'mon, guys, let's all play nice." You want to know something? It usually doesn't work.

BC: Let's backtrack. After the books were approved in July, in August we all went up to Chappaqua [New York]. We got this conference center, and we all sat down — the same group here — and we worked out the first storyline.

HM: And the thing that was so amazing was when Bobbie said, "Okay, now, let's just all go around the table and each throw out an idea for an initial crossover." I think we were all heading in the same direction. We all had somewhat different ideas, but they were all pretty much going in the same direction. That immediately broke the ice, as far as I was concerned. Because now we were no longer trying to force our major ideas on one another; it was, "Okay, this is what we want to do. Now let's start fine-tuning it."

DC: Or where we did force things, we would gang up on somebody, and ruthlessly dominate them.

BC: Yeah, that happened a lot. *(laughter)*

MA: What do you think made the writers work together so well?

CC: We had pretty rough ideas. I don't think anybody had completely-worked-out things.

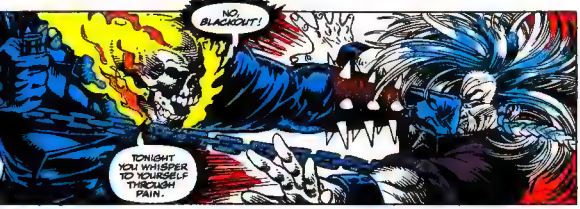
MA: But this was after the finished proposals had been approved by Tom DeFalco, right? So why do you think the ideas meshed so well? Because you at least, Howard, expected to have a hard time —

HM: Well, not so much a hard time, but when you throw four different writers and an editor together — or any five different people — you're going to get five different opinions, nine times out of ten. I think what we have working for us is that, of the five of us who were there, all but one were incredibly warped individuals. *(laughter)*

NIGHTSTALKERS
WRITER:
Dan
Chichester
Classic Marvel characters Hannibal King, Blade and Frank Drake team up to form an occult detective agency — and pledge to wipe out all things demonic!
STARRING:
H. King
Blade
F. Drake

HM: There was a great deal of lunacy at the symposium —
DC: *Depraved* lunacy.
MA: Was anything killed while you were there?
HM: Oh, wounded at best.
LK: I personally have to give the majority of the credit for how well it all meshed together to our complete lack of preparedness. *(laughter)*
If any of us had stopped to think up a storyline before we went to the meeting, then we would have ended up arguing with each other. But none of us did, so we all ended up in the morning going, "Oh my God, do have any ideas?!"
DC: But it seemed to mesh, I mean in terms of throwing out broad-stroke ideas. At a base level we all had at least a similar interest in the way the villain would work; you know, the way the strength of the villain would match up to the strength of the heroes. We wanted a female Dr. Doom, almost.
HM: That was our starting point, and I think Bobbie had said, "We need to come up with a strong central villain." And then I believe it was Chris's idea to make it a female —
CC: I think a couple of us had had the same idea; we were all sort of sick of the male ones —
HM: A lot of it came out of us linking into and creating the central villain, who turned out to be Lilith. Once we started nailing that down, we built onto that character and worked backwards; first deciding what her motivation is, what she wants, and how we're going to have our heroes prevent her from getting what she wants.
MA: Were there any particular moments from that conference that stick out in your minds?
DC: The charts. *(laughter)*
Lilith, at one point, was Lylyth. You know, we had all these bizarre spellings, trying to be clever, spelling with y's. . .
CC: L-double-l-apostrophe-l. . .
DC: But at one point when we were discussing how she relates to her demonic children, and her coming across this kind of dimensional void back into this reality, there were about five or six versions of these charts on which we were trying to describe to each other what we were thinking. And we had these icons that represented dimensional barriers, and what represented a greater demon as opposed to a lesser one. . .
MA: And these charts helped you?
DC: Well, they helped us dismiss things. We'd say, "This is way too complicated."
BC: They only helped us that third time Len left the room for a cigarette. *(laughter)*
HM: Yeah, you want to talk about things sticking out! Every time we'd hit a block, Len would leave to smoke a cigarette, and he would come back and say, "What if we did this. . .?" And it would always be the solution to the problem, so we kept sending him out. He's right now getting chest X-rays. . .
MA: For each writer: did your proposal concept come before the Midnight Sons universe or after? If before, how long have you been kicking the idea around?
CC: Before, and it's been kicking around almost as long as I've been working at Marvel. I guess the first time I submitted **DARKHOLD** was June of 1990.

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE
WRITER: Howard Mackie
A team-up book starring Ghost Rider and John Blaze, the original motorcyle-riding Ghost Rider!
STARRING: GhostRider Blaze



DC: I guess mine came after; I mean, Bobbie approached me. They had this idea, they wanted to do this thing, and she asked me if I wanted to do a proposal based on — well, I guess it was all three characters at that point, which I didn't know a great deal about. I looked them over, and just

(continued on page 27)

A LOOK AT TOY FAIR MARVEL STYLE

For nine days in February Spider-Man and Wolverine prowled the area of 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue to celebrate the lavish celebration called Toy Fair. The skyscrapers at 200 Fifth Ave. and 1107 Broadway are the Toy Buildings, with 500 showrooms chock full of ingenious new toys. The Jacob Javits Convention Center on 34th Street and 11th Avenue houses the overflow with more than 1000 additional booths that allow manufacturers from all over the world the chance to show their wares. From February 10-14 each company attending the Toy Fair maintained a showroom to display their new lines to retail buyers who in turn decide what toys will appear in their store for the rest of the year.

The event received nationwide coverage throughout the media due to its importance to the industry and the fascination the general public has for the colorful world of toys. Many would recognize the Toy Building as the place where Tom Hanks and Penny Marshall filmed *Big*. It isn't easy to gain access to these rooms. The Toy Manufacturers of America attempt to admit only buyers to the fair, according to a representative of that organization. For 89 years according to a representative of that organization. For 89 years this major event has added a spark of imagination and energy to this section of lower midtown during the dreariest month of the year.

Over the last ten years, Toy Fair has become streamlined. Once a full two week event, it now takes only six days to fulfill its purpose, according to Alan Gordon, Marvel's Senior Vice President of Licensing. The companies that sell the toys and the store that buy them have grown – ecoming nationwide chains so that now it takes fewer people to buy larger quantities of toys. Still, more than 20,000 people visit the showrooms.

Marvel is involved in Toy Fair on two fronts. Michael Z. Hobson, Senior Vice-President of Publishing, attends to scout ideas that would be strong comic books: BARBIE, for example. But the greater emphasis is on toy products, and this year on the X-Men in particular. Marvel mutants and super heroes could be seen in 26 different showrooms, and the company lent its support to the toy manufacturers' visibility through such activities as costumed character appearances.

Marvel characters adorn products including bicycles, skateboards, door alarms, board games, Halloween costumes, kites, yoyos, Viewmaster viewers, Valentine cards, stickers, coloring, activity and storybooks, model kits, TSR role-playing games, handheld electronic games, and arcade and video games.

The Toy Biz line of action figures is so popular that the Wolverine figure appeared on the front page of the February 12 issue of *Toy & Hobby World* as "toy of the day." In fact, the X-Men action figure line was rated among the most popular in that category in 1991, leading to a more aggressive line for 1992. Unlike The Teenage Mutant Turtles or Batman, the X-Men haven't yet had a movie to bring them into public attention; they are a phenomena whose success has sprung solely from comic books. Something about Marvel, and the X-Men in particular, seeps into the collective imagination of America.

The success of the Toy Biz line is due to the broad range of heroes, villains and accessories they offer. Both X-Men "Blue" and "Gold" strike forces, X-Force and each team's respective villains are represented, from Apocalypse to Magneto to Stryfe.

The Marvel Super Heroes group includes Venom with a furious, flicking tongue, Green Goblin with "pumpkin bombs," and the entire Fantastic Four team.

Marvel's domination of the showrooms continued right into the night on Wednesday, February 12, when Marvel hosted an X-Travaganza at the 200 Club, an elegant dining and event facility in the Toy Fair building at 200 Fifth Ave. Between 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. 840 guests arrived, twice the number expected, lured in by good food, an open bar, and the *Danger Room*.

A crowd of non-mutant heroes mingled throughout the club as guests gathered around the lavish spread. A Wolverine ice statue provided a beacon pointing the way to the

Photographs by Eliot R. Brown

Who better than Wolverine to keep money safe in the new X-Men Bank from Happiness Express.

Every fan becomes a walking comic book with "Tattooz" from Just Toys. No mylar double-bagging, though.

food. Shrimp and crab abounded, alongside brie pastry marked with an "X." Waiters and waitresses served caviar on smoked salmon and for dessert there were X-Men cookies.

A neon sign hung above a passageway leading to the Danger Room. A guard in silver spandex reminiscent of "Ziggy Stardust" watched the door to the mysterious entryway to one side of the club. He ushered a few of the curious at a time from a long line into the simulation of the X-Men's training room. Guests were encouraged to don a velcro suit and cling to a wall a'la Spider-Man. They discovered Professor X at the controls in a booth high above the room. Everyone had the opportunity to try out two new video games — SPIDER-MAN and CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE AVENGERS, and to act as "innocent bystanders" during a battle between Wolverine and a giant robot.

Imaginations kindled and appetites sated, the crowd dispersed from the vaulted halls, taking a little Marvel magic with them as they once again walked out into the cold, February night, ready to retire and prepare for another day at the Fair.

The Pressman Toys showroom at Toy Fair featured the full gamut of Marvel table-top games, including the Uncanny X-Men "**Deck the Mutants**" Card Game.

Photograph by Eliot R. Brown

Photographs by Wide World Photo

Marvel President Terry Stewart, backed by a Wolverine ice statue and a table full of catered goodies, welcomed everyone to partake of the fantastic feast at the Marvel Comics Toy Fair Party.

Photographs by Wide World Photo

In the "Danger Room," Wolverine confronted a high-tech robotic threat, much to the delight of innocent onlookers.

Photograph by Elliot R. Brown

At the Toy Biz showroom, the 1992 Marvel Super Heroes action figure line was displayed, including the new Fantastic Four figures. Note the mangled "Yancy Street" lamppost.

Photograph by Wide World Photo

Editor Babbie Chase and friend enjoyed an evening of food and fun at the Marvel party.

— Paula Foye

Hot Sheet

Hello and welcome to The Marvel Hot Sheet! A few months ago, MARVEL AGE Editor Steve Saffel asked me if I thought AGE readers would be interested in hearing what upcoming projects the folks *inside* the industry (i.e. editors and retailers) thought would be the next big breakthroughs or exciting sellers. I responded that, as a fan and a collector of comic books, I wished *I* had a crystal ball that could see into the future and help me sort the wheat from the chaff. "Good," he replied, "then conjure up a ball and commence with the prestidigitation!" And thus, The Marvel Hot Sheet was born.

Each month in the Sheet, we'll take a look at several upcoming comic books that Marvel Editors and a special group of retail advisors have singled out as books we should each keep an eye on for the sheer enjoyment of the fan in all of us. So fire up the air conditioner and pour yourself a tall cold one, because it's time for things to get HOT!

With summer right on top of us, it's only appropriate to start off this first Sheet with a look at what's sure to be one of the hottest storylines ever (yes, I mean EVER). As Gary Colabuono, CEO of the Chicago-based chain *Moondog's* Inc. put it "If it's sweltering outside it'll be downright blazing inside comic shops this summer when Marvel unleashes "Rise of the Midnight Sons." This six-part storyline concerns an invasion of our Earthly plane by an evil unlike any seen before — the demon-mother Lilith, who will stop at nothing to insure the malevolent future of her demon children. This display of motherly love is hatched in GHOST RIDER #28 and before the ghastly action is all over, it will spawn no less than four new monthly series, all of which are guaranteed to be big hits. "Marvel has been 'marvel'ously successful at developing strong families of books," states Steve Gursky, owner of the New Jersey/Pennsylvania chain *Steve's Comic Relief*. "'Midnight Sons' expands the already well-received line of super-hero horror comics headlined by GHOST RIDER."

And just what is it about "Rise of the Midnight Sons" that has everyone's temperature climbing? Could it be the massive impact it's expected to have on the Marvel Universe? "I'm watching the 'Midnight Sons' very carefully," stated DOCTOR STRANGE Editor Mike Rockwitz. "What happens during that story could very well effect how other books, especially the mystically-based ones, develop in the future." Or perhaps people are excited by writer Howard Mackie's explosive story? Editor Marc (CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER) McLaurin thinks so. "From the first time I heard that [Editor] Bobbie Chase was putting 'Midnight Sons' together, I knew it was a great idea and that it would really shake up comics. I'm looking forward to it. I really don't want to see it until it comes out — I want to be surprised with everybody else."

While Marc is shielding his eyes from the blinding "Sons" light some other fortunate people were given a sneak peek at art from the storyline's kick-off issue, as well as from the four spin-offs, SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE, MORBIUS THE LIVING VAMPIRE, DARKHOLD, and NIGHTSTALKERS. All agreed that the stunning art was one of the primary strengths of all of the books. "GHOST RIDER #28 has one of my favorite artists on the book: [inker] Joe Kubert, which makes it top on my list," beamed Brian Schur of *Cosmic Comics* (Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska). And when we told Brian about the return of MORBIUS, he waxed nostalgic. "Morbius was one of my favorite characters of the '70s. This new comic is a nice reworking of the older concept: a vampire Punisher consumed by vengeance, with dripping fangs instead of blasing guns, taking a bite out of crime."

For the record, "Rise of the Midnight Sons" runs like this: GHOST RIDER #28 (June release) written by Howard Mackie with art by Andy and Joe Kubert; SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #1 by Mackie with art by Adam Kubert (June); MORBIUS THE LIVING VAMPIRE #1 (July) by writer Len Kaminski and artists Ron Wagner and Mike Witherby; DARKHOLD

"If it's sweltering outside it'll be downright blazing inside comic shops this summer when Marvel unleashes 'Rise of the Midnight Sons.'"

#1 (August) by writer Christian Cooper and artists Richard Case and Mark McKenna; NIGHTSTALKERS #1 (September) by D.G. Chichester with Ron Garney and Tom Palmer; with the finale in GHOST RIDER #31 (September).

Another, more loosely knit family of titles will also get together this summer in "Dead Man's Hand." This nine-part storyline weaves itself throughout Marvel's "gritty-city" books, DAREDEVIL, NOMAD, and PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL. In "Hand," the void left by the fall of the Kingpin (in the now-classic DAREDEVIL #300) will finally be filled as crime bosses from all over the United States vie for the title of undisputed crime lord — that is, unless Daredevil, Nomad, and the Punisher have anything to say about it. Some see this mob war, and the intervention of these hard bitten crime fighters as inevitable. "A lot of fans were [were] wanting a[n] end to 'Last Rites,'" states Mike Raub of the Connecticut-based chain, *Dream Factory*. "They wanted to know more on how the fall of the Kingpin was going to affect New York's crime set-up. . . The natural team-up of Daredevil and Nomad in DAREDEVIL #307 *makes for an interesting beginning to this story. Things will really heat-up when the Punisher is tossed-in...." Marc McLaurin, always the fan at heart, added "I'm looking forward to the Dead Man's Hand crossover because the writers got together, said 'we want to do this,' and organized it themselves. It's very creatively inspired." The June offering for "Dead Man's Hand" are DAREDEVIL #307, NOMAD #4, and PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #45.*

A third family which should garner heightened attention this summer is the perennially strong SPIDER-MAN group. In addition to all of the hoopla surrounding the world's favorite wall-crawler's 30th Anniversary, which kicks into high-gear with this month's release of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #365, there will be three Spider-Man Annuals on the shelves as well: AMAZING #26, SPECTACULAR #12, and WEB #8. As if this wasn't enough to make your blood boil with excitement, all three tie into July's NEW WARRIORS ANNUAL to form a story called "The Hero Killers." Summed up Cliff Biggers of Marietta, Georgia's *Dr. No's:* "Fans can't get enough Spider-Man right now, thanks to the [recent] Carnage and the Sinister Six storylines. . . Add some hologram covers, some surprise revelations, guest-starring roles from a number of books, and the anniversary, and you've got a Spidey summer for sure."

"Avengers #350 will build on the fire started by the 'Galactic Storm' storyline."

"Jackson Guice's work in the **DEATHLOK ANNUAL** looks incredible."

In addition to these major crossover stories, there are big events taking place in certain individual issues of some classic Marvel titles. Both THE AVENGERS and THOR, for example, reach key milestones this month, and will celebrate the excitement with double-size issues filled with story and art from both the past and present.

AVENGERS #350, besides sporting a significant issue number, features a host of all-star guests as the Starjammers (of X-MEN fame) storm Avengers mansion in search of their former teammate, Binary (who used to be Ms. Marvel of the Avengers). And if the Starjammers are there, led by Scott Summers' father, can Cyclops and a few other X-folk be far behind? This ig-time story couldn't have come at a better time, according to Cliff Biggers. "AVENGERS #350 will build on the fire started by the "Galactic Storm" storyline. The X-Men guest-appearence will guarantee that this one's a hit, too." Marvel Executive Editor and CAPTAIN AMERICA scribe Mark Gruenwald added that he, too, was looking forward to this special issue "because, with Bob Harras' unique position as the editor of X- MEN and writer of AVENGERS, he is with this issue coordinating and interweaving two continuities that should have more interaction than they have."

Avengers member Thor also marks an anniversary this month in THOR #450. For the last year we've seen new Thor — Eric Masterson — handle some "godly" chores while the original Thor has been in exile. Now it's time to find the one true Thunder God. Mike Raub summed up the importance of this landmark issue and AVENGERS #350, as well: "Part of the job of being a comic fan is being a history buff as well. . . [but] besides the interesting stories, the deluxe gate-fold covers of both THOR #450 and AVENGERS #350 will give new fans the license to drool over a major chunk of Marvel art from the past histories of these books."

Other books which should garner quite a bit of attention this summer include DEATHLOK ANNUAL #1 (a time-travel story and the secrets behind the Deathlok cyborg) and THE PUNISHER SUMMER SPECIAL (which features the return of the villainous De Sade, who plans to have the Punisher star in his very own snuff film! This one has the bonus of a Simon Bisley cover.). Buddy Saunders and the staff of his *Lone Star Comics* chain (Arlington, Texas) see these two as possible breakthroughs this summer, mainly due to their topnotch art. "Jackson Guice's work in the DEATHLOCK ANNUAL looks incredible. This should do very, very well. Likewise Mike McKone's PUNISHER SUMMER SPECIAL."

"...The line-up (for the Marvel Swimsuit Special) this year makes *Sports Illustrated* look like a Kindergarten Primer."

Finally, the summer — and this inaugural Hot Sheet — just wouldn't be complete without a look at what is quickly becoming a much anticipated tradition: the MARVEL SWIMSUIT SPECIAL. With the hottest lookers of the Marvel Universe as rendered by the likes of George Perez, Joe Quesada, Jan Duursema, Jim Lee, Adam Hughes, and a host of other stellar talents splashed from cover to cover, how can this not be a hit? "The 1991 issue was a surprise sellout," reminds Gary Colabuono. "And the line-up this year makes *Sports Illustrated* look like a Kindergarten Primer. Don't miss it!"

So say we all. Now, where did I put that sun-tan oil?

—Jerry Novick

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEK WORLD™

He is William Shatner, one of the best known actors in the world today. His portrayal of Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise (in the classic ***Star Trek*** series) is legendary. His T.J. Hooker was a model for the modern-day cop series. His Rescue 911 has saved, and continues to save scores of lives each year.

Having accomplished all this, he finds himself confronted with a new challenge, the challenge that confronts every successful man — where to go from here? What to do for an encore?

For William Shatner, the answer was simple — conquer a new world, the world of literature. "I had a little time on my hands," he recalled at a recent convention in Tucson, Arizona, "and had been playing with the ***Tekwar*** idea for some time. I decided that it was time to take it to a publisher." He smiled, remembering, "He liked it enough to give me an immediate go-ahead, so I sat down and wrote it."

"I think of it as 'Tech Noir,' or perhaps that should be *TEK* Noir."

"It sold very well," he added, shaking his head in wonderment. "Hundreds of thousands of copies, so they asked for a sequel, then

another."

"I've done four of them now (***Tekwar***, ***Teklords***, ***Teklab***, and an as-yet untitled successor), and don't have any idea how many more there might be."

With that world conquered, William Shatner has turned his attention in still another direction — the world of graphic literature — the world of **Epic Comics.** His new vehicle: William Shatner's ***TEKWORLD.***

"It's a mixture of Dashiell Hammett and *Blade Runner,*" says Editor Fabian Nicieza. "I think of it as 'Tech Noir,'" he chuckles. "Or perhaps that should be **TEK** Noir."

"Tek" is an electronic "drug," a minuscule cylinder that powers something called a *brainbox* — a mini-computer that connects directly to the human brain, allowing the user to *live* any fantasy he or she wants.

Think of it, true dream fulfillment. The ability to live a different life, better than the one you may be trapped in.

The ultimate addiction — and therefore, the most dangerous thing in the world.

It must be stopped before it destroys civilization. This is a job for the Police, and men like Jake Cardigan. Jake is a police detective, one of those sworn to stop the spread of the new drug — an almost impossible task. After all, the dealers in Tek are selling dreams, and dreams are hard to suppress.

Still, Jake tries, even though he is the proverbial gnat trying to bring down the elephant. After all, he reasons, if he cannot win, at least he can annoy his enemy.

After all, the dealers in Tek are selling dreams, and dreams are hard to suppress.

And annoy the enemy he does, enough that the Tek Lords strike back. Jake is framed for dealing in Tek. He is arrested, tried, and sentenced to fifteen years in "The Freezer," an orbiting prison where convicts are frozen into suspended animation.

His career — and his life — seem to be over.

But four years later, things change. Jake is revived and returned to Earth. Something has happened, and a Jake is needed.

He has a second chance.

"The first five issues of the comic will be an adaptation of the first novel (***Tekwar***)" editor Nicieza explained. "Afterwards, it's possible that we may do the other novels every once in a while."

"The first book's got a good, strong story line," pointed out writer Ron Goulart, "It lets me introduce all the characters, show the reader what they're like, what their problems are."

"After that," Fabian expanded, "we'll do new stories. We'll examine Jake Cardigan's addiction to Tek, how it affects him and the way he handles his cases. We might even explore how he became addicted. . . ."

"Although we don't want to reveal too many specifics," Goulart added.

Nicieza agreed. "Of course, Jake will continue to work with the Cosmos Agency, which will give us an opportunity to have him travel all around the world."

"A very different world," pointed out Goulart. "A world where greater Los Angeles covers most of California, and where mankind has colonized the moon, although it hasn't yet reached the planets."

He grinned: "Of course, that gives us plenty of places to tell our stories — in

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space colonies, orbiting the earth, in undersea cities, even on the moon itself!"

Back in **TEKWORLD:** Jake finds that he owes his freedom to the Cosmos Detective Agency and goes to work for them. His first job involves locating Dr. Kittridge, a scientist who has just made a world shaking discovery — a machine capable of neutralizing Tek chips.

Unfortunately, the good Doctor and his daughter have vanished before telling anyone their secret.

Worse, they were in the Borderland when they vanished. The Borderland: a sort of no-man's land between Los Angeles and Mexico, home of Martinez, one of the biggest and most powerful Tek dealers.

Ron Goulart is right at home in borderlands — his career is proof of that. He is listed as a "consultant" on the **TEK** novels (Shatner himself has repeatedly expressed gratitude for his help) and has written more than 60 novels of his own, ranging from straight science fiction (***Death Cell, Plunder***), to outrageous comedy (***Galaxy Jane, Dr. Screwloose***). But science fiction hasn't been enough for Mr Goulart — he has also written extensively in the mystery genre, where he has been nominated for two Edgar Allen Poe awards, the top honor in the field.

"I also wrote the ***Star Hawks*** newspaper strip with Gil Kane," he pointed out, "as well as doing work for ***Marvel*** in the '70's. More recently, I wrote the ***Encyclopedia of American Comics*** and the ***Comic Reader's Companion.***"

Editor Fabian Nicieza has also assigned a very special artist to the project. "The book will be penciled and inked by Lee Sullivan, whose work readers will be familiar with from ***RoboCop,*** and, earlier, the ***Dr. Who*** series."

"Lee's style seemed perfect for this book, and his samples proved that was true. His ability to combine slick backgrounds with gritty action is just ideal. I love the look of stubbled, realistic faces against all this slick technology."

Goulart concurred. "The look is perfect. We're trying to do a combination of the more positive aspects of science fiction novels and films. A book that deals with interesting characters, and entertaining action — this is not a book that's going to deeply analyze the future."

"Although we *will* explore some interesting questions," Nicieza pointed out. "After all, this *is* the future — and we'll see what has happened to a lot of countries, like Russia — will it recover? Or Japan — will they end up controlling the world economically?"

"But our main emphasis will be on character," said Goulart. "Cardigan's an interesting man, a man who has been cheated of several years of his life. We'll want to explore how he feels about that — and how he deals with it."

He chuckled. "And, of course, there's Gomez, Jake's partner. He's a different sort of man than Cardigan — cynical as hell, and ready with a wisecrack every time Jake gets a little too officious. They make a very good team."

In ***TEKWORLD's*** Mexico, Jake learns that things are even more complicated than he thought, involving a rebel leader called Warbride, robot bulls, and the occasional killer android. Still, Jake perseveres, fighting his way through obstacle after obstacle in his search for the missing scientist.

And falling in love with his daughter — or her double. . . .

"William Shatner designed ***Tekwar*** as a combination of ***T.J. Hooker*** and ***Star Trek:*** a private eye

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Lee Sullivan's cover illustration for WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWORLD #2.

story with more and better gadgets," Goulart explained. "The comics medium is just perfect for following though on that. After all, we can show all those wonderful gadgets, and not worry about how they're supposed to work.

"We can also move the story along more easily in a comic than you can in a novel," he pointed out. "**TEKWORLD** will move much faster than the **TEK** books."

"Of course, this isn't part of the super hero mystique, we won't have the sort of body-count that the **Punisher** books routinely do. The idea here is to do an entertaining action series, an attractive companion book to go with the super hero stuff.

"And with William Shatner's determination to explore and expand the field," added Editor Nicieza, "We hope to appeal to people who might not otherwise read comics." He grins. "People like — dare I say it? — fans of ***Star Trek.***"

"And , of course, there is also the possibility of other connections to come, **Tekwar** seems perfect for TV or films, and with William Shatner involved, well, all I can say is that our readers will want to get in on the ground floor."

A combination of ***Star Trek*** and ***T.J. Hooker,*** with a touch of ***Bladerunner,*** a pinch of Sam Spade, and just a soupcon of ***Laura*** — quite a recipe, and one that should be quite interesting.

It's called ***TEKWORLD.***

— Doug Murray

Mark's REMARKS

From the beginning monsters walked the Earth. Marvel's Earth, that is. The spirit of the monster books that were Marvel's mainstay through the late 1950s — titles like **TALES TO ASTONISH**, **TALES OF SUSPENSE**, **STRANGE TALES**, and **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY** featuring such creatures as Groot, Blip, Xemnu, Googam and the inimitible Fing Fan Foom, was still in evidence with the Mole Man's subterranean monster on the cover of **FANTASTIC FOUR #1**, the Sub-Mariner's Monstro in **FF #4**, and Kurrgo from Planet X in **FF #7**, to cite but a few examples. They were part and parcel of the fabric of the Marvel Universe from the beginning. As an early Marvel reader, I had no problem with a world that had both super heroes and monsters in it. The monsters of the Marvel Universe were science fiction-ish rather than horror-ish in their essense and the Marvel Universe struck me as essentially a science fictional one.

Flash forward ten years. In 1971, the provisions of the Comics Code, which had remained unchanged since their adoption in 1954, were revised for the first time. The guideline prohibiting the depiction of horror was liberalized to allow for monsters of the kind depicted in "classical literature" like Shelley's Frankenstein, Stoker's Dracula, and the work of Edgar Allen Poe. Talk about opening the floodgates. Within the next few years, Marvel had launched a whole slew of monster titles and features — **TOMB OF DRACULA**, **MONSTER OF FRANKENSTEIN**, **WEREWOLF BY NIGHT**, **GHOST RIDER**, **MAN-THING**, Son of Satan, Morbius, Man-Wolf, Living Mummy, and so on. And you know what? I had a problem with their annexation to the Marvel Universe. To me, as good as any given book might be, the horror titles created a sense of aesthetic dissonance nestled as they were in the confines of the good ol' M.U. I knew and loved.

I guess the primary reason was that they all were based on the supernatural. And despite the fact that the supernatural was an element of the M.U. since the advent of Dr. Strange in 1963, I somehow felt that the great proliferation of the supernatural upset the beautiful balance of the universe as I knew it.

I had this problem before before in another medium — movies. I was a fan of both the monster movies of the 1930s and 40s and the science fiction movies of the '50s — "spook" and "space" movies, I called 'em as a kid. I could never decide which I liked better when they came on my local late night scary movie program. While they both had common elements--does not Frankenstein use scientific appartatus and does not *The Thing From Another World* feature a scary monster? — they had a fundamental difference in my mind. True spooky movies were set in the past, it seemed to me, and true spacey movies were set in the future. (Whew, was I glad I lived in the present!) Past and future, reasoned the preadolescent me, did not mix well. Ultimately, I decided the future — science fiction — was more to my taste.

Two things. First, while I didn't believe that every or even many of the sf concepts that abounded in the M.U. were possible, I did and do believe in science. When it comes to the supernatural, I tried but I can't bring myself to believe in even one iota of it. So while even the most basic and preposterous super-science in the typical Marvel story can be seen as promoting the idea that science exists and people will somehow acclimate themselves to it, what does a horror story promote? In my opinion, it promotes acceptance of the existence of the supernatural. Philosophically I'd rather have my entertainment promote silly science than serious supernatural.

My second objection was purely aesthetic. To me, Frankenstein loses his ability to chill when he's placed on a world that Galactus has visited several times. It's hard for me to buy into the scariness of a vampire in a world where every third person seems to be a mutant or an Eternal or something equally special. And why should I be scared by a brown-furred Werewolf by Night when I'm not supposed to be scared by a blue-furred Beast? And furthermore, why hasn't a genius like Reed Richards figured out that

Okay, so by the time the Marvel mix of science fiction and horror came along, I was a decade older, and presumably more articulate. But still, having vampires and werewolves and living mummies in the Marvel Universe bugged me. Everything was set in the present, so the past/future dichotomy couldn't bother me. . .so what did?

vampires are real and whipped up a cosmic framistat to depower them? These concerns — both aesthetic and logical — bothered me contemplating the integration of these monster books in the Marvel U.

So now in 1992 we are in the midst of a full-tilt horror book revival. Ultimately most of the '70s horror-heroes will return in some guise or another in the next few years, just you wait. So, as chief custodian of the Marvel Universe, how do I feel about the mix of monsters, mutants, and super heroes in the universe today. Well. . .

My position has somewhat softened. After twenty-some years I've gotten used to the aesthetic dissonance that gothic and high tech elements bring to a common universe. And with the revival characters being handled so much better than their predecessors, it's hard to resent the excitement they bring to the universe. I've even tried to make peace with some of these supernatural characters by incorporating them into the straight-ahead super hero adventures I write. My mindset in handling these spooky guys is perhaps that what we consider supernatural in the real world is simply weird science of a certain sort in the Marvel Universe.

I sometimes wonder why all the supernatural monster books died out by the end of the '70s. Couldn't even one of them have ridden past the initial wave of the fad and been published all this time? (The original **GHOST RIDER** came close with 81 issues under its belt.) After all, the horror genre flourished well after most of our monster books gave up the ghost, so to speak — the **Nightmare of Elm Streets** and **Friday the 13ths**, for example. My theory? That the monster books we were doing were neither scary nor heroic enough.

Each storytelling medium has unique things that it does well. And to my way of thinking, invoking the feeling of horror and dread was something both the motion picture and prose media could do better than comics. Motion pictures have real human actors to relate to, as well as movement and sound to build mood. Prose stories have words which can be strung together to make a reader's imagination do the work of custom-designing images of sheer horror. Comics had built-in disadvantages in depicting horror that perhaps only the most gifted artist and writer could hope to surmount. As far as depicting heroism, comics take the back seat to no medium, but the particular character concepts in the monster-hero titles of the '70s weren't worked out as well as they might have been in order to provide the characters with solid enough foundations. Compare the premise of the Morbius of the '70s — non-supernatural vampire trapped on the planet Arcturus — with the premise of the '90s Morbius — non-supernatural vampire who decides to slake his bloodlust on those he deems deserve to die — and you'll what a difference a good premise can make for the exact same character.

So while the supernatural heroes of Marvel will never be my particular cup of tea, I've got to admit that if the new Ghost Rider is any indication of the thought and care that's going into the '90s breed of monster-heroes, let me be among the first to welcome them with open arms back into the Marvel Universe.

— Mark Gruenwald

WHERE GROOT WALKS-- DEATH FOLLOWS!
I DEFY YOU, GROOT!! I SHALL DESTROY YOU BEFORE MIDNIGHT!
BEHOLD! I AM GROOT, THE INVINCIBLE! WHO DARES TO DEFY ME??

THE BOSSMEN by RICK PARKER

HEY, TOM--! TAKE A LOOK AT THESE SKETCHES SOMEONE SENT IN--!
NOT NOW, MARK! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY?! PUT 'EM ASIDE-- I'LL LOOK AT 'EM LATER!
OKAY... BUT SOME OF 'EM ARE PRETTY GOOD...
...ESPECIALLY THE CHEESE-CAKE SHOTS...
OH, YEAH?! LEMME SEE!!!

MARVEL III TRADING CARDS

Coming in June, Impel Marketing, in conjunction with Marvel Comics, releases the third set of *Marvel Universe trading cards.* These cards, which will showcase most of the characters in the Marvel Universe, follow the highly successful and sold-out first two sets.

To find out how the trading cards were developed, **MARVEL AGE** spoke to Alan Gordon, Senior Vice-President, licensing, and Bob Budiansky, special projects editor in charge of producing the cards.

This year the 200 card set will be split into nine different categories. One decision involved in creating the cards is determining which categories will be used. According to Bob Budiansky the first four categories remain the same each year: Super Heroes, Super Villains, Teams, and Rookies, for the main reason that there will always be heroes, villains, teams and rookies.

The five other categories change each year on a rotating schedule. Some years those categories can include weapons, first covers, and environments. This year the decision was made to use the categories: Team Ups, Wars, Marvel Milestones, Origins, and Cosmic Beings.

After the decision is made on what categories to use, the next step is to decide on which characters or situations to use in those categories. The process differs from category to category.

For cards such as the character and team cards, the choice is based on a couple of different factors. If a character or team has a book (such as Spider-Man or the X-Men) they will definitely end up on a card. Also, if a character has been around for a while, but just recently has seen some action, they have a chance of getting on a card. On the other hand, if a character is going to be killed in an issue coming up or hasn't seen much action in a while, then they probably won't be featured. The editors also maintain a list of all of the characters in each set of cards and sometimes, if a character hasn't appeared since the first set, they may have a shot of getting in the new one.

For the villains and rookies cards, the process of deciding isn't as easy, mainly because both types of characters usually don't have their own books. Of course, there are always exceptions. For example, the new character Sleepwalker has his own book, and so will probably end up on a card. The villains are chosen basically on the popularity of the characters. Characters such as Magneto and Dr. Doom end up on cards because of their obvious high profile. As for the rookie cards, the card editors ask the comic book editors if

any new characters have been created since the last set of cards. The goal when choosing characters or situations for cards is to best represent the current Marvel Universe.

Another decision involved in the process of creating the trading cards is finding artists to complete the illustrations. The editors first approach artists usually associated with the characters or teams such as Ron Lim from **SILVER SURFER** and Mark Silvestri from **WOLVERINE.** Many times the artists approached are too busy with their monthly books to be able to give time to cards. For those situations, the editors approach artists who they believe will properly represent the characters or situations.

An important feature of the Marvel Universe Trading cards has always been the information section on the back of the cards. The main focus when writing the information section is to include details that will interest the readers.

The background information on character cards includes the character's real name, power ratings, and first appearance. To improve the background information and keep the cards up to date the writers have been including recent important events in the life of each character. For example on Johnny Storm's **(FANTASTIC FOUR)** card the description will include the recent discovery that his wife, Alicia, was really a Skrull in disguise.

For other categories the information provided varies. Teams, Wars, and Marvel Milestones all include the books and the characters involved.

For those familiar with past trading cards, there is another, more noticeable change involving the "Did You Know" trivia section that has been used in the past two sets. This year the trivia question will be "given a rest" and will be replaced with a quote that capture the personality of each character.

Which raises the question, "Who writes the information that we all read?" That task is left to people who are familiar with the characters or situations and can do them justice. The writers are assistant editors at Marvel, free-lance artists, letterers, or writers. The 1992 writers include Len Kaminski, Chris Cooper, Pat Garahy, John Morelli, and Mike Larkey.

Another main feature of the trading card sets are the hologram cards featuring five Marvel Universe characters. This year the characters featured on the hologram cards will be Ghost Rider, The Thing, The Hulk, Wolverine, and Venom.

Everyone is really excited for the changes involving the hologram cards. Instead of the normal silver foil, this year's hologram cards will be printed on colored foil chosen to match the character. For example, the Incredible Hulk will be printed on green foil, while the Thing will be on copper.

The improvement in the hologram cards isn't the only exciting change in this set. Another change involves the usually boring border areas of the

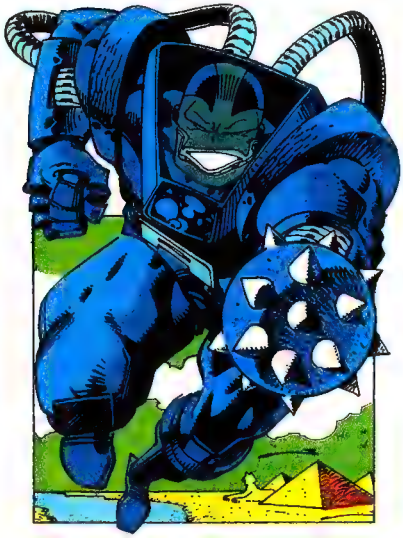
cards. This year each border area will be designed with an outer space background painted by popular cover artist Joe Jusko. But it doesn't end there. These space borders are part of a larger feature.

Trading cards are printed on sheets of 100 cards. Using this basic idea, the creators of the cards came up with a new idea in trading cards. When the cards are placed in numerical order from 1-100 and 101-200, their border areas will create two large outer space background paintings. The figures or situations on the cards won't be affected at all by the background design. And this feature won't be advertised to the general public, but will be left the collectors to figure it out on their own.

How do the editors know that what they are doing will be what the collector wants? According to Bob Budiansky. Impel has several "focus groups" to find out just that. A focus group is a group of people that Impel and Marvel believe will buy the cards. The members of the focus group are given cards and asked their opinions. Thus far the opinion is that the changes are great.

The main goal of the creators of the Marvel Universe Trading Cards is to keep each set of cards exciting and interesting. **MARVEL AGE** asked Bob Budiansky if the process of creating the cards had become any easier. Bob responded by saying that, instead of getting easier, they had made the job even more difficult by trying to improve the cards each time. When asked what he had learned, his answer was only "to know what to expect before we start."

The Marvel Universe III Trading Cards will be available this summer from Impel, and, if past years are indication, they'll disappear fast.



— Kristin M. Sundin

Guest Starring CLIVE BARKER

I've been reading comics as long as I could remember, and my enthusiasm for them is rooted in the very early pleasures of reading them. I think that, by and large, the first instinct of artists is to return to the world the things that were given to them as experiences. You see a movie, and you think "Boy, I'd love to give other people the thrill that I just had seeing that movie." And I've always loved comics, so historically, I'm drawn to being involved in that.

Secondly, there's the creative freedom. I've just had a lunch, talking about some new ideas for some new comics, and they're outrageous ideas; huge, world-consuming ideas, which you could never get in the movies. Comics give an imaginative freedom which is to be celebrated.

It's a collective endeavor, and I enjoy collective endeavors, so that's also a pleasure. And in the end, it's also a popular medium, and I'm a democrat. I believe that stories should be disseminated as widely as possible. I have no interest in elitist art, whatsoever. I have no interest in the thing which is only seen by a hundred people.

There's always been horror in comics. From the classic horror comics that EC produced to the new comics of today. I think the difference is an element of style and sophistication, and a moral ambiguity, actually, in current horror comics which were never there in EC. In EC, you were essentially telling little moral tales; you were an adulterer, and sooner or later, your dead wife came back to get you. That was there. I think that the current stuff is a lot more complex, and obviously a lot more interesting to look at, as well. The artwork of many of the horror comics has taken a gigantic leap, with much more sophisticated imagery.

The other thing I think I've seen, is (and if this isn't a word, it will now be) an *iconization* in horror comics. What we're seeing is comics being built around images. A primary example in HELLRAISER is "Pinhead." The EC comics had their little icons of the witch and so on, but they weren't really major forces in those comics, or fleshed out characters. What we're seeing now is a whole mythology which climaxes in certain key characters. In NIGHTBREED, we've got Cabal and Peloquin fulfilling that function. In some of the material we're planning in the future of HELLRAISER, we've got the Harrowers and Morte Mamme.

There's a new sense that, instead of horror stories being a sort of dark little tales that are spread throughout the world, that there are mythologies underpinning these things. That's much closer to the literary tradition; to Dracula and to Frankenstein's monster and to the werewolf tales, where you had a sense that this was all pinned to some very elaborate and very ancient mythology.

This was certainly so with Dracula, preeminently with Dracula. Dracula was this ancient force, Vlad the Impaler and all that, with the history of vampires. We're doing something similar to that, and that is new in comics, and to horror in comics.

The other horror related material that Marvel is turning out, the Ghost Rider and the Sons of Midnight titles, is increasingly putting is emphasis on the mythologies. You can see the sense that people are again focusing on the iconographic value of these characters, and I love that. I think that's exactly the right direction that material should be going.

They're not "on-the-nose horror." They're horror-adventure, they're super hero-horror. They're a hybrid, and that's what makes them interesting. Ghost Rider is an excellent example. He's a guy with a burning skull for a head, but also, he's more than that. He's got the identity problem that super heroes classically have, so he's a hybrid in that sense. Where I think we see a very interesting crossover is in the other direction. I mean, Wolverine is very clearly a werewolf. He is derived from a tradition of werewolves; that is, he is a man who has completely bestial tendencies, and is dealing constantly with these tendencies. Is he supposed to enjoy them, or should he be horrified by them?

We've seen — brilliantly, I think — Ann Nocenti take Daredevil to Hell, which is again a theme completely from horror. We've seen the Tomb of Dracula revisits, on the one hand, and the Punisher/Wolverine/Ghost Rider cross-over, which I loved. Three heroes against Hell was very much a horror idea. We're seeing all these wonderful hybrids and I think it's great.

Part of the pleasure of comics is that you can take risks. It's not like when you're making a movie, and it's going to cost a fortune, and if you get it wrong, well, you've spent twelve million dollars. You can take a risk, and if it works, it's going to be fun, and it opens up all new directions. Taking Daredevil to Hell was a fresh direction, and a dangerous direction for that character, but it was there in the title all along. I mean, where else was he going to go? I really applaud the darkening of the texture of super heroes, because I think it's tremendous to read.

Horror in comics is unlike the horror found in other fields and media, and I feel this is a good thing. I've always believed movies were movies, and comics were comics, and you derived a different pleasure from each. Anybody that comes to the Hellraiser comic expecting the same experiences as from watching the movie is going to have a rude awakening.

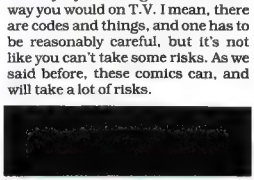
In fact, the comic takes a lot more moral and structural risks in the way it tells its stories than the movies ever did. Movies are a much more conservative medium, because so much money is spent making them. Even on a small film with a modest budget, you're spending a lot of money. Comics have this wonderful freedom, because to produce the 22 pages of a comic is probably less expensive than a days work on a low budget movie set. You can take chances with the stories, with the characters, with the morality. And you can be very, very dark.

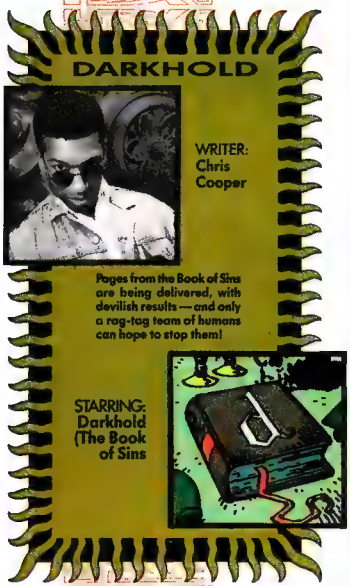
One of the rules of thumb in Hollywood is that movies can't be "bummers." You can not leave a viewer with a downer, because if you do, the word of mouth is bad. You can do that with comics. Actually, I think there's a large percentage of the audience that says "yeah, go on, be as grim as you can." There's a sort of mutual dare between the reader and the creators.

Another thing is that the special effects that we've seen in some of these comics have been out of the range of all but the most expensive movies. The upcoming Harrowers material, for instance, contain spectacular scenes that the movies couldn't attempt, and I love that. It's another thing that comics do brilliantly well.

I would prefer to be out in the marketplace saying, "Here are some really strange, mind-bending ideas; here's some delirious stuff which we poured out of our brains. Taste it. Touch it. Be moved by it. Be transformed by it. Change your dreams a little bit." And comic books are this wonderful, accessible, easily assimilated adventure, and it's a pleasure to be involved in something which can be so widely and easily experienced by a large range of people. It crosses class bounds, it crosses every kind of boundary. Comic books are just this amazingly available medium.

And yet you don't get censored the way you would on T.V. I mean, there are codes and things, and one has to be reasonably careful, but it's not like you can't take some risks. As we said before, these comics can, and will take a lot of risks.





(continued from page 11)

did whatever I wanted with them *(laughter)* which has upset some people. . . who shall remain nameless.

LK: You can go all the way back to about the time I was about 12 or 13 and reading 70's **MORBIUS** comics. And this [new **MORBIUS**] is sort what I always wanted them to do when I was reading it. So now that I have the POWER, I will impose my vision on the character.

MA: Each writer, what is your interest in horror and the occult?

CC: Well, there are two answers. The first answer is, at the very first Assistant Editors' Workshop I ever attended, it was the meeting where Tom and Mark sat us down and said, "Where should Marvel be going in the 90's?" Even though it was already 1990.

The consensus that came up was, "More horror." And I wanted to write more than anything else. I said, "All right, gosh darn it, I'm going to invent a horror book." So that's what I did. I thought it would be purely perfunctory and I'd hate what I would come up with, but it would *sell*, and I ended up with something that I absolutely loved.

And then, also, my whole family, we all grew up with science fiction and horror —

HM: In a coven! *(laughter)*

CC: Yeah, you know, some people say grace before dinner. .

HM: . . . they *kill* Grace before dinner! *(laughter)*

CC: My sister is actually more of a horror fan than I am. . .

BC: Thus spake Christian Francis Cooper. . . *(laughter)*

DC: I have no interest in horror and the occult whatsoever. *(laughter)* In fact I find it abhorrent and offensive to my sensibilities.

BC: I just remember [Dan at] that meeting: "Well, let me pull out my Horror Dictionary and look up Lilith!"

HM: He had *notes!* He has this black binder that he carries with him — he was our horror expert at the meeting. . .

DC: Well, the demonic expert. . .

CC: You named Lilith.

MA: What did you name her after?

DC: Well, "Lilith" is the mythological name of Adam's first wife. Whereas Eve became the mother of mankind, Lilith became the mother of the demons, the fiends and the imps and that kind of thing. So we just took the name from that.

I don't know, it's just something I toy with occasionally. I dabble in. *(laughter)* When I was editing [for Epic Comics], I had been lobbying [then-Epic Editor in Chief] Archie [Goodwin] from the moment I started, to do a horror comic at Epic. We were finally able to do the **HELLRAISER** stuff, and obviously Archie had done the Warren [Comics horror] stuff so we both wanted to do something. But there really hadn't been a market in horror comics for a long time. And finally there started to be a resurgence, and right now, of course, it's been coming out of the woodwork.

The interesting thing about this book, at least for me, is that the three characters are completely anti-occult. They want to destroy everything demonic, which is opposed to everything I work on or have worked on, which kind of revels in the nastiness and the demonology. It's kind of a challenge to write these guys who are so anti- everything which I normally just go off on.

HM: I don't know if I really knew that I had that much of an interest in horror and the occult. I like being scared. I like writing about things that sometimes frighten me. I have always read Edgar Allen Poe and, uh —

DC: Oh, the classic answer, oh geez —

HM: I *did!* What do you want from me?! And I also read Stephen King, okay, I read *Stephen King* and *Dean Koontz!* Okay? There you go!

I like to read horror, so it seemed natural — I'm not as sick and warped as Dan, and I don't get involved in the actual hands-on horror and occult stuff that Dan does. . .

DC: I do not! Just because I'm wearing a robe, that *no* reason to. . . *(laughter)*

I also think that when you get into this kind of genre, there's just such a huge potential for drama and melodrama, and really powerful antagonists and protagonists who are fighting for this huge cause. As a writer, it just gives you a real inspiration on that level. The material almost writes itself at certain points.

HM: I agree with what Dan said.

DC: That's only because I've cast a spell on you, Howard. *(laughter)*

LK: My interest in horror and the occult? Well, they say you should write what you know. And after being married for four years. . . *(laughter)*

LK: . . .and then being Ralph Macchio's assistant, I guess I'm qualified.

MA: Writing about demons, devils, Hell. . .how does this jibe with each of your own philosophical beliefs?

HM: But we don't really — I think the interesting thing about this little pocket of the Marvel Universe is that it is not strictly an occult or horror genre. There are elements of that in there, and there are elements of the super hero stuff. In my opinion, there's a little gap between the two that I think these books fall into.

When I'm writing a story, I'm trying to reach down and choose things that I am most afraid of.

DC: I think this is like horrific action, horrific adventure. . .as opposed to things like **HELLBLAZER**, the DC book. You know, that main character basically wanders through a world populated by ritual and sacrificial ceremony and these sort of very occult trappings. And here, it's not the same thing; it's not a celebration or a study of these kinds of things — though there may be elements of it — it's much more, I think, on the mythological scale, playing on the heroic kind of thing. That's been Marvel's stock in trade, except that we're kind of working in the dark underbelly of the Marvel Universe, as opposed to the bright high ground that the **AVENGERS** or whatever play in.

CC: I would say that of the Midnight Sons books, mine is probably the closest to a horror book. There is no super hero. And as far as philosophical underpinnings, there is sort of an idea that runs through all of **DARKHOLD**, which is that because there is no super hero, you have ordinary people in this comic book who don't have powers and yet they're confronting these really awful things, and what are they going to do about it? You don't have to be rich, powerful, famous or whatever to change the world around you.

DC: From a storytelling point of view, I always try to relate mythological. Something like, you know, **DAREDEVIL** populates the high ground, the purest heroic cycle, in the most pretentious way possible.

I like the idea that there is an intrinsic good in certain characters, and that they can achieve things against great odds. And trying to see that there are different sides to all characters, good and evil, and how that relates to them. And I think that's my philosophy about everybody, and how it would work in a story as well.

HM: For me, it doesn't come down to a matter of personal philosophy. It comes down to a matter of personal fears. When I'm writing a story, I'm trying to reach down and choose things that I am most afraid of. And I'm afraid of big, scary monsters *(laughter)*.

No, that's the glossy, fun stuff. It comes down to: I'm a father. One of the things that scares me the most is anything happening to my children. As a result, in my stories Ghost Rider is often protecting children.

And that is not necessarily putting children in direct danger, but that is part of his motivation. I choose not to use children as victims, because I'd rather not give anybody any real bad ideas. But by the same token, that's a nerve that I touch, even when I'm coming up with a victim that's not necessarily a child. In **GHOST RIDER**, a phrase that's been overused is, "Innocent blood has been spilled." Well, in my mind, you can't get any more innocent than a child.

LK: Where Morbius is concerned, the character is perpetually balanced on the line between homicide and suicide. And that fascinates me, probably because I identify with it.

DC: Ooookay. . .

LK: He's very much a means to take a perspective on the world that I have, and do something with it. It's just a particular way of looking at things, and I can take that, put it within this character, and it sort of separates it from me. It goes *over there*.

MA: Has working on the Midnight Sons as part of a team effort been a unique experience for each of you?

LK: I don't know if I would say it's a unique experience because I don't have that much to compare it to. It's not like I have 15 years of freelance writing behind me; I sort of got started this way rather than anything else. But has it been good? Sure, I've had a lot of fun doing it.

HM: Yeah. Again, a lot of that has to do with something I said earlier, which is we, the writers involved, we all seem to be so far going in the same direction. There has not been a lot of head-butting, which can happen at times. I've been in communication with the other writers of the books separate from our group meetings, you know, there's a lot of sharing.

It is really a team effort. It has been good, I don't think there's a lot of professional jealousy other than between Dan and myself — *(laughter)*

Plus I don't have to come up with any ideas of my own, which I haven't done from the beginning. *(laughter)* But now I have at least three other writers who can supply me with ideas, and I get to reap all the financial rewards.

DC: I'll disagree with Howard on one point, if only to separate us in some way. I haven't had a lot of experience in working with groups in terms of coordinating things for the Marvel stuff.

Most of what I've done has been either separate completely, or worked within such an area that the interaction has been something I can dictate to one degree or another.

I think we are bringing a slightly different outlook to things, because I think that the view of the Midnight Sons is a little darker. You know, look, if we are to bring in other characters from the Marvel Universe, which we are certainly going to be doing, I think the readers are going to end up seeing them in maybe a slightly different light. If we bring in Dr. Strange or the Punisher or these other characters, who are normally perceived in one way, they just might be turned on their head. *Not* to refute anything, but just to give a perspective that more suits the scummy little areas we populate.

As far as working, it's been a great experience. All of our sensibilities seem to be going in the same direction —

HM: *This* week.

DC: I think we all have a similar goal, we really want to make this work, not only for ourselves, but really make it meet the potential it has.

CC: It's also fun because we get to create characters that can sort of play with each other. Incidental people who come up, who are all sort of occult-based, can wander into one book, or wander into another book, or pop back and forth, and it's a fun way to work.

BC: It's been the most fun I've ever had since I've been at Marvel. Seriously. I got a taste of it when Howard turned his original proposal for the [first] **GHOST RIDER** book. It's fun having a book you can sort of consider your own. . .I know it's not all mine, but, it's sort of like "our baby." I feel a pride in ownership for what we've done. I think the stories are fantastic, they speak for themselves. . .but it's just been so much fun and so creative putting it together.

LK: This whole thing has been way too easy and way too much fun — I'm sure we'll all be punished for it.

— Evan Skolnick

MORBIUS, THE LIVING VAMPIRE

WRITER: Len Kaminski

Dr. Michael Morbius is back, with a bizarre credo: "If I must drink blood, let it be the blood of criminals!"

STAR: Morbius

FRED HEMBECK
Presents
HELLCAT and
The
SON OF "SATAN"
in
"Guess WHAT'S coming to DINNER"
OH MY...
PATSY, WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP PACING! AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT AS IF MY FATHER IS COMING TO VISIT-- WE'RE ONLY HAVING DINNER WITH ONE OF YOUR OLD FRIENDS!?!
GIVEN A CHOICE BETWEEN CHOWING DOWN WITH A DEMON WHO FANCIES HIMSELF SATAN OR DINING WITH MS. HEDY WOOFE, WELL, I'D GLADLY TAKE MY CHANCES WITH THE DEMON, DAIMON!
PATSY, SHE COULDN'T BE THAT BAD?!?
YOU'VE NEVER MET HER, HON. Y'SEE, LONG BEFORE I MET YOU-- IN FACT, LONG BEFORE I STUMBLED ONTO GREER NELSON'S BATTLESUIT AND TOOK UP THE ROLE OF HELLCAT -- YOUR FUTURE BRIDE WAS KNOWN TO THE WORLD AT LARGE AS "PATSY WACKER, AMERICA'S SWEETHEART"!
OH.
THOSE COMIC BOOKS.
UH HUH. AND YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD IT BAD--YOUR DAD WAS ONLY A DEMON, MY MOM WAS A COMIC BOOK WRITER! AND NOT A VERY ORIGINAL ONE, EITHER-- SHE "CREATED" A WHOLE SERIES OF BOOKS BASED ON THE EXAGGERATED ANTICS OF MYSELF AND ALL OF MY REAL LIFE TEENAGE FRIENDS! YOU CAN JUST IMAGINE THE POTENTIAL FOR EMBARRASSMENT-- IT WAS ENORMOUS!!
ANYWAY, EVER SINCE CHILDHOOD, HEDY AND I HAD BEEN STAUNCH FRIENDS, BUT SOMEHOW MOM JUST KNEW! SHE WAS PERFECT TO BE CAST AS MY NUMBER ONE RIVAL!! GIVEN THE GIRL'S NATURAL SELF INVOLVEMENT AND INNATE COMPETITIVENESS, THE ROLE SHE PLAYED ON THE PRINTED PAGE QUICKLY BEGAN TO SPILL OVER INTO REAL LIFE-- AND WITH A VENGEANCE!.
WHATEVER PATSY HAD, HEDY WANTED, TOO-- ONLY BIGGER AND BETTER!..
BUT SURELY, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?..
TIME DOESN'T MATTER. I HAVEN'T SEEN HEDY SINCE THOSE UNREAL MAGAZINES CEASED PUBLICATION, BUT I KNOW IN MY HEART THAT THAT WOMAN HAS NOT CHANGED.
..AND PLEASE, I'VE ASKED YOU BEFORE, DON'T CALL ME "SHIRLEY"!
DON'T YOU SEE? I'VE TOTALLY CHANGED MY LIFE-- I'VE SUCCESSFULLY TAKEN ON THE IDENTITY OF A RETIRED CRIMEFIGHTER, AND I'M HAPPILY MARRIED TO A MAN WHOSE BACKGROUND LEANS HEAVILY TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL! HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS HOW SHE'S GOING TO ATTEMPT TO TOP THAT!!
DING DONG
!
..I GUESS WE'LL SOON FIND OUT, WON'T WE?..
..OH MY..
HI, PATSY. LONG TIME, NO SEE!
I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY FIANCE, The FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER!!
BREAD GOOD, FIRE BAD!
(DON'T WORRY, HON, WE'LL BE DINING SOON!..)
..AND FROM NOW ON, CALL ME "BUCKETTE"! (JUST DON'T RICK ME, heh..)
..SAY, DO YOU HAVE CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PHONE NUMBER? I REALLY THINK WE SHOULD TALK.
..THANKS, MOM, THANKS A LOT...

THAT MANY SPIDERS CAN'T BE WRONG!

Send your letters to: MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

Attention correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

This month's awesomely arachnoid title comes to us from Ronn Hubbard, Jr. of Murray, KY, and it contains more than a little truth — you can collect an awful lot of spiders over the thirty years that Spidey's been around! So thanks a lot, Ronn!

But hey, that's not to say that the rest of you can start slacking off. We still need a spiffy new title for this column next month, and if we use one of yours, we'll thank you right here in this very space. No, don't mention it; that's just the kind of people we are.

But enough about us. We've got some particularly long letters this time around, so let's get right to them!

Yee-ha, buckaroos! Look at that background — exactly the same color as a certain rose of Texas! And that can only mean that we're deep in the heart of our LETTER OF THE MONTH! As always, we burrowed through our voluminous sacks of mail and came up with a letter that we think will be of particular interest to Marvelites far and wide.

In fact, we think it might even interest other folks too. You might say it's aimed at a "crossover" audience. . .

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,

I recently visited my local comics shop, eagerly awaiting the last issue of THE INFINITY GAUNTLET. The ending was a bit disappointing, but I suppose it was worth the fifteen or so dollars it cost me to get the whole series and its crossovers.

Now, after assuming the crossover lines were finished for a while, I hear of "Galactic Storm," the nineteen-part series due in January assembling all the Avengers members past and present, and spanning seven titles. I mean, aren't all the "X" titles enough to deal with? Now I'll have to shell out over twenty dollars for the complete run and purchase titles I don't normally read. There must be others who feel the same way I do. What do you think, MARVEL AGE? Is it really worth it?

Also, I was searching through my father's CD case and spotted a group called the Branford Marsalis Quartet. Some of their songs include "The Dark Knight" and "Wolverine," and in the liner notes they give thanks to the X-Men for "being who they are." Do you know anything about this group? I'd really appreciate your help.

So until Wolvie sings jazz and the Blob loses weight, Make Mine Marvel!

Rob Derbyshire
634 Wellington St. East
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
P6A 2M5
Canada

Well, Rob, we've said similar things before, but we'll say it again: We're sorry if you don't like "Galactic Storm," and we're sorry if you don't like crossovers. But you have to understand that there are a lot of people out there who do like crossovers, and that's why we (and other comic book publishers) produce them. Your main criterion for buying *anything* (comics or otherwise) should be to spend your money on things you like.

Another complaint that we've heard on occasion is that there are some people who think they have to buy *all* of the parts of a crossover, even the ones that appear in titles they don't usually buy. However, we tried an experiment and read just one random chapter of "Galactic Storm" (Part 3 — QUASAR #32 — for you systematic experimentation buffs), and you know what? We could understand the story just fine. Naturally, we didn't get to see the end of "Galactic Storm" that way, but it didn't hurt our ability to follow the ongoing continuity of QUASAR. So the bottom line is this: If you're interested in "Galactic Storm" (or any crossover) then it's probably worth the cost and effort to you. But if you're not, just buy the titles that you'd have bought anyway. We'll still love ya. Oh, and don't worry, Rob, even if we have gotten a little long-winded, we haven't forgotten about your other question. Branford Marsalis is a talented jazz saxophonist who comes from a remarkably musical family. His father, Ellis, is a longtime New Orleans jazz pianist, and his brother is noted trumpet player Wynton Marsalis. Branford's got quite a lot of experience under his belt. Along with Wynton, he started out as part of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers before branching out into a solo career of his own.

As well-rooted as Branford's familial influences are, though, it seems that he's also got a whole other set of influences that we never knew about — namely comic books! Ac-

Professor X monitored the "Danger Room" proceedings from his control booth at the Marvel Comics Toy Fair party.

Photograph by Wide World Photo

Marvel characters adorned the skateboards and bicycles found in the Brookfield Athletic Co. showroom.

tually, Branford's not the only musician to incorporate a healthy dose of four-color fun into his tunes. There are lots of others, as evidenced by items such as Wings' song "Magneto and Titanium Man" back in the '70s or the more recent Silver Surfer-inspired album SURFING WITH THE ALIEN by Joe Satriani. We figure it just proves what we've said all along: Slowly but surely, Marvel is taking over the world!

Dear MARVEL AGE,

I belong to an apa (amateur press association) called the *Marvel Zombie Society*, which has been mentioned in your magazine a few times, and I really enjoy it. The MZS has thirty members, all of whom share a love of comics (especially Marvel) and a desire to discuss them. Members contribute stories, art, reviews, articles, and even interviews with creators. It's a great forum for fans to talk about comics with other fans, and to make new long-distance friends!

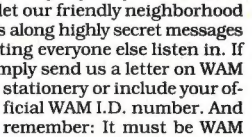
Anyway, my point is: I thought it might be a good idea for you people to do an article on apas, or maybe just give a little information about them in a letters page. I'm sure there are a lot of Marvel readers out there who would be interested in joining one, because they really add a new dimension to reading comics!

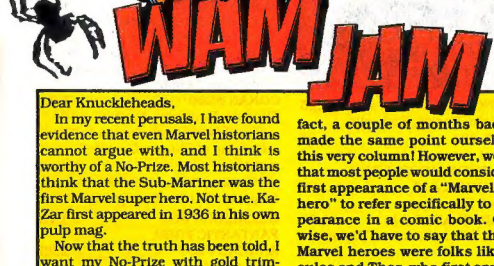
Thanks for listening!

Scott Haan
920 State St.
Lafayette, IN 47905

No need to thank us, Scott — we're happy to hear from you. And we agree with you — apas really do add a new dimension to comics; in fact, many current comics creators got their starts with apas, and a lot of them have continued after they hit it big, just because it's so much fun. (For those of you who may wonder what we're talking about, an apa is sort of a cross between a magazine and a club . Members produce their own publications and get together — typically throwing a party in the process — and assemble their contributions into completed 'zines that then get distributed to the entire membership.)

Incidentally, while we're on the topic of great ways to meet fellow fans, let's just take a minute to talk about our Marvel Correspondents column. As most of you know, the column lists Marvelites who are looking for new friends around the world whom they can meet by mail. The column ran in MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE for a few years, but it hasn't appeared in our last few issues. To be honest, the reason it hasn't been here is that we haven't received a whole lot of response of late. At its peak, we had so many correspondents on tap that we had a waiting list . But more recently, the requests have been few and far between. We haven't given up on the column, and if the response picks up, it's quite likely that you'll see it return to these very pages. So if you want to be listed in the column, simply send your name, address, age, and the titles of your three favorite Marvel Comics to "Marvel Correspondents." We'll do the rest. Nothing could be easier. . .except maybe checking up on our monthly. . .





Boy, we love saying that. Anyway, as you know, the WAM Jam is a chance to let our friendly neighborhood Wild Agents of Marvel pass along highly secret messages to fellow Agents while letting everyone else listen in. If you want to take part, simply send us a letter on WAM stationery or include your official WAM I.D. number. And remember: It must be WAM Jam, because jelly don't shake like that!

Dear Knuckleheads,

In my recent perusals, I have found evidence that even Marvel historians cannot argue with, and I think is worthy of a No-Prize. Most historians think that the Sub-Mariner was the first Marvel super hero. Not true. Ka-Zar first appeared in 1936 in his own pulp mag.

Now that the truth has been told, I want my No-Prize with gold trimmings. Oh, and Make Mine Marvel!

Tim O'Neil
P.O.B. 10211
Truckee, CA 96162

Well, Tim, your point about Ka-Zar's appearing in text stories in pulp magazines is well taken. In fact, a couple of months back, we made the same point ourselves in this very column! However, we'd bet that most people would consider the first appearance of a "Marvel super hero" to refer specifically to an appearance in a comic book. Otherwise, we'd have to say that the first Marvel heroes were folks like Hercules and Thor, who first appeared in ancient mythology.

Ka-Zar's first comic-book appearance was in the very first Marvel comic book (aptly titled MARVEL COMICS #1) right alongside the Sub-Mariner and the original Human Torch, in 1939.

Although all three heroes appeared in that historic issue, Namor is generally considered to be number one because he'd previously appeared in a non-Marvel give-away comic book titled MOTION PICTURES FUNNIES WEEKLY, thus edging out the competition.

So the bottom line is sorry, no No-Prize this time around. Still, as a consolation gift, you might want to run down to your local comics specialty shop for a copy of the hardcover reproduction of MARVEL COMICS #1 and take a gander at all these landmark first appearances for yourself. It may not have the gold trimming you asked for, but then, gold is so gaudy, don't you agree?

checklist

FIRST WEEK

AVENGERS #352 1.25
Harras, Epting, Palmer
AVENGERS WEST COAST #86 1.25
Thomas, Ross, Dzon
CABLE TRADE PAPERBACK 13.95
Simonson, Liefeld
Reprinting NEW MUTANTS #87-94, featuring Cable's debut and the first appearance of the Mutant Liberation Front.
CAGE #6 1.25
McLaurin, Turner, Ivy
Jailed and tortured in a sadistic prison, Cage must either escape or die! "The Evil and the Cure" part 2 of 4.
CAPTAIN AMERICA #406 1.25
Gruenwald, Levins, Bulanadi
CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11 2.25
Gruenwald, Levins, Bulanadi
Part 1 of 4 part "Citizen Kang" crossover with THOR, FANTASTIC FOUR and AVENGERS annuals.
COPS: THE JOB #4 1.25
Hama, Jusko, Harris, Palmiotti
DAREDEVIL #308 1.25
Chichester, McDaniel, LaRosa
Hornhead battles his deadliest foes ever: the Hand! Part 4 of "Dead Man's Hand."
DARKHAWK #19 1.25
Fingeroth, Manley
Featuring guest stars Spider-Man and Sleepwalker, the return of Portal and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants.
DIGITEK #1 1.75
Tomlinson, Lanning, Power
Scientist Jonathan Bryant is transformed into the ultimate, computerized killing machine! Part 1 of a 4-part limited series.
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #110 1.50
Nocenti, Lightle, Starlin, Alexander, Cooper, Stanici, Nicieza, Blackburn
Four tales featuring Wolverine, Thanos, Ghost Rider and the all-new Red Wolf saga.
NAMOR #30 1.25
Byrne, Jae, Lee
NEW WARRIORS ANNUAL #2 2.25
Nicieza, Peterson, Williams
Spider-Man teams up with the New Warriors to fight the revealed mystery of Mastermind, plus Rhino, Speed Demon, Stiletto, Bombshell and Discus.
NFL SUPERPRO #12 1.25
Delbo, DeCarlo
NOMAD #5 1.75
Nicieza, Olliffe, McKenna
ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER #3 1.75
Cover by Andy Kubert
Johnny Blaze battles the Devil
PUNISHER #69 1.25
Abnett, Lanning, Braithwaithe, Williamson
The Kingpin has planted a time bomb and only the Punisher can stop it.
SHE-HULK #43 1.75
Byrne
TERROR, INC. #3 1.75
Chichester, Zaffino
Terror faces an armada from hell, with guest star Daimon Hellstrom!
TOXIC CRUSADERS #5 1.25
Gerber, Yaniger, Severin
UNCANNY X-MEN #292 1.25
Lobdell, Partacio
The X-Men vs. the Morlock's. Featuring Callisto & Mikhail.
WARLOCK #5 2.50
Starlin, Mantlo, Byrne
WCW WRESTLING #6 1.25
Lackey, Wilson, Hudson
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #92 1.25
Mackie, Saviuk, Williamson
A distraught Betty Brant swears to kill her husband's murderer

SECOND WEEK

ALPHA FLIGHT #112 1.75
Furman, Broderick, Patterson

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #366 1.25
Michelinie, Bagley, Emberlin
BARBIE #21 1.25
Trusiani
BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT COMIC BOOK #10 1.25
Dorkin & Severin
CAPTAIN PLANET #11 1.25
Furman, Hitch, Rimmer, Taylor, Fawcett
GHOST RIDER #29 1.75
Mackie, Kubert, Kubert
Guest starring the X-Men, Wolverine and the Beast.
GROO THE WANDERER #93 2.25
Aragones, Evanier
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #28 1.25
Valentino, Montano
PENDRAGON #3 1.75
Tomlinson, Abnett, Gascoine, Buylla
Guest starring Iron Man and the Black Knight.
PUNISHER WAR ZONE #7 1.75
Dixon, Romita Jr., Janson
The Punisher teams up with a female cop to catch a murdering rapist.
QUASAR #38 1.25
Gruenwald, Capullo, Candelario
Wolverine, Warpath and the Hulk join Quasar to battle Warlock & the Infinity Watch!
SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #201 2.25
Thomas, Wyman, Simons
SILVER SABLE #4 1.25
Wright, Butler, Sanders
Sable confronts Dr. Doom's even-more-evil twin!
SILVER SURFER #71 1.25
Marz, Wyman, Christopher
The Surfer enlists the aid of Firelord to battle Morg, Galactus' newest and deadliest herald.
SLEEPWALKER #16 1.25
Budiansky, Blevins, Manley
Part four of the Color Blindness Saga, with special guest stars Mr. Fantastic and the ever lovin' blue-eyed Thing.
THOR ANNUAL #17 2.25
Thomas
Thor vs. the evil Prester John! Part 2 of "Citizen Kang" crossover
WOLVERINE #60 1.75
Hama
Shiva returns and his target is Sabretooth!
WONDER MAN #13 1.25
Jones, Johnson, Panosian
Spider-Man is missing! Wondy teams up with Hercules and Thor to find him.

THIRD WEEK

AVENGERS #353 1.25
CAPTAIN AMERICA #407 1.25
Gruenwald, Levins, Bulanadi
Cap vs. Cable in the climactic conclusion to "The Man and The Wolf" part 6 of 6.
CONAN #260 1.25
Thomas, Docherty, Alcala
The shocking conclusion to "The Coming of Shuma-Gorath!"
EPIC #4 4.95
Verheidon, D'Israeli, Burden, Snydum, Shiner, Snodgrass
EXCALIBUR #54 1.75
FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #25 2.25
Gruenwald
The FF battle the Avengers. Part 3 of "Citizen Kang" crossover
G.I. JOE #128 1.25
Hama/Wildman
HELL'S ANGEL #3 1.75
Jaye, Semler, Smith
Angel faces the leader of Mephisto's dead super hero squad.

INCREDIBLE HULK #397 1.25
David, Keown, Farmer
The Leader is back and attacking the Pantheon! "Ghost of the Past" part 1 of 4.

MARVEL AGE #116 1.00
Cover by Andy Kubert
A special X-Men extravaganza featuring the Cable limited series and the all-new X-Men animated TV series.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #111 1.50
Nocenti, Lightle, Starlin, Alexander, Figueroa, Wilson, Cooper, Stanici

MARVEL TALES #265 1.25
Lee, Leiber, Esposito

MORBIUS #1 2.50
Kaminsky, Wagner, Witherby
Double-sized premier with polybagging and fold-out poster. "Rise of the Midnight Sons" part 3 of 6.

NICK FURY AGENT OF SHIELD #39 1.75
Browne & Sharpe, Wyman, Hudson
"Cold War of Nick Fury" part 2 of 4.

NIGHTBREED #19 2.25
Cover by Martin Mercer
A werewolf-seeking bounty hunter becomes the hunted.

PUNISHER #70 1.25
Abnett, Lanning, Braithwaite, Williamson

SAM & MAX SPECIAL COLOR COLLECTION 4.95
Purcell
The classic SAM & MAX black-and-white adventures, now in full color, plus a brand-new story.

SPIDER-MAN #26 2.95
DeFalco, Frenz, Larsen
Awesome anniversary special featuring hologram cover and gatefold poster.

WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #8 1.75
Starlin, Raney, Austin
The Infinity Watch battles Thanos. An Infinity War crossover.

WHAT IF? #41 1.75
Valentino, Valentino, DeLarosa
"What If the Avengers Fought Galactus First?" Giant-size issue!

X-FACTOR #82 1.25
David, Stroman
X-Factor must confront an all-new group of mutants: The X-tles.

X-MEN #12 1.25
Nicienza, Thibert
What is the mysterious menace from the past that threatens Professor X and Wolverine?

FOURTH WEEK

AVENGERS ANNUAL #21 2.25
Gruenwald
The Avengers team up with the Fantastic Four to battle Kang in the conclusion of "Citizen Kang."

BARBIE FASHION #21 1.25
Slate

CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER SUMMER SPECIAL 5.95
Chichester, Lofficier, Lovece, Zaffino, Koeb, Talaoc, Johnson

DEATHLOK #15 1.75
McDuffie, Cowan, Manley

DR. STRANGE #45 1.75
Thomas, Isherwood
Guest starring the Silver Surfer and Nova. An Infinity War crossover.

FANTASTIC FOUR #368 1.25
DeFalco, Ryan, Bulanadi
Reed in kidnapped by the evil Magus as the Thing battles the Hulk. An Infinity War crossover.

INFINITY WAR #4 2.50
Starlin, Lim, Milgrom
To stop an army of evil doppelgangers, Warlock must try to recreate the Infinity Gauntlet!

IRON MAN #284 1.25
Kaminski, Hopgood, Wiacek
A dying Tony Stark to be placed in cryogenic suspension.

JAMES BOND, JR. #9 1.25
Abnet, Capaldi, Bambos

KID 'N' PLAY #8 1.25
Coye, Frazier, Boyd

MARVEL REQUIRER #30 Free
A free 8-page comic on what Marvel has to offer in August.

MOON KNIGHT #42 1.75
Kavanagh, Various
An Infinity War crossover featuring a roster of all-star artists: Klaus Janson, Norm Breyfogle, Kelly Jones, James Fry, Ty Templeton and Gary Kwapisz.

MOTORMOUTH #4 1.75
Marks, Frank, Smith
Guest starring: Nick Fury, Hell's Angel, Warheads and Badhand.

THE 'NAM #72 1.75
Lomax, Vansant

NEW WARRIORS #27 1.25
Nicieza, Robertson, Mahlstedt
Speedball and Rage fighting themselves?

SILVER SURFER #72 1.25
Marz, Wyman, Christopher
The Surfer and Firelord search for Nova on a wild west planet.

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #192 1.25
DeMatteis, Buscema
Spidey must stop the Puma from a murderous rampage. "Eye of the Pums" — Part 2 of 3.

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #2 1.75
Mackie, Kubert
Blaze is menaced by Steel Wind: a villainess from the past, while GR falls into a coma.

THOR #451 1.25
DeFalco, Frenz, Milgrom
Thor battles the barbarous Bloodax.

WARHEADS #4 1.75
Vince, Erskine
Special guest stars X-Force.

WHAT THE? #21 1.25
Barta, Rice, Haller, White, Fisch, Severin, Lewandowski, Wildman

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWORLD #1 1.50
Goulart, Sullivan
Debut of a new series based on Shatner's best selling novel, TEK WAR.

WOLVERINE #61 1.75
Hama

X-FORCE #14 1.25
Nicieza, Liefeld, Pacella, Panosian
The Mutant Liberation Front attacks X-Force at their own headquarters.

X-MEN CLASSIC #75 1.25
Claremont, Simonson, Wiacek

MARVEL AGE CROSSOVER GUIDE

DEAD MAN'S HAND:

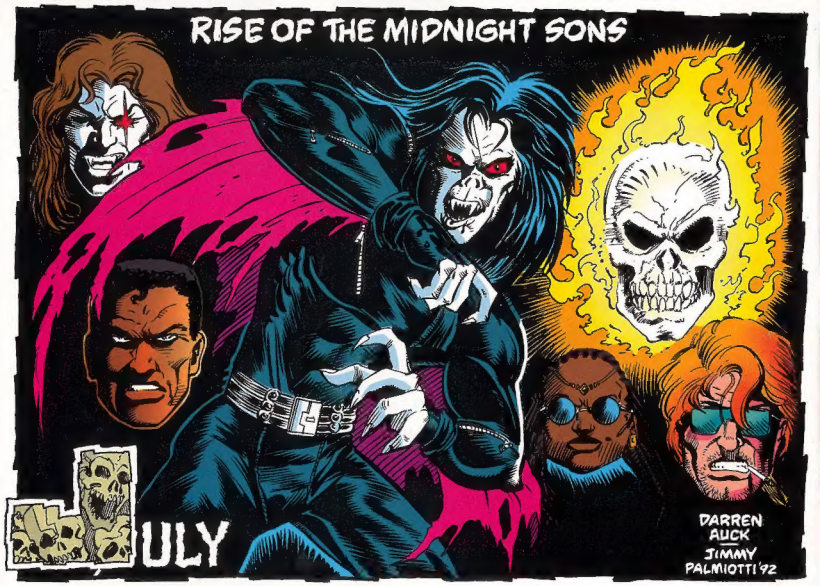
DAREDEVIL #308
NOMAD #5
PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #46

INFINITY WAR:

ALPHA FLIGHT #112
DR. STRANGE #45
FANTASTIC FOUR #368
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #28
INFINITY WAR #4
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #110, #111
MOON KNIGHT #42
NEW WARRIORS #27
QUASAR #48
SILVER SABLE #4
SLEEPWALKER #18
WARLOCK #8
WONDER MAN #13

RISE OF THE MIDNIGHT SONS:

MORBIUS THE LIVING VAMPIRE #1



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
5 BLACK PANTHER INTRODUCED IN F.F. #52 1966	6 HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOHN BYRNE ERIC FEIN	7 NEW THIS MONTH: DIGITEK #1	9 VIRGINIA ROMITA CRAIG ANDERSON TERRY KAVANAGH			DR. STRANGE FIRST APPEARED IN STRANGE TALES #110 1963
12	13 TOM PALMER	14 MIKE ESPOSITO	15 JACK ABEL	16		
19 MIKE MAIER	NEW THIS MONTH: CABLE AND THE NEW MUTANTS TPB		22 MIKE ROCKWITZ	23 MIKE VOSBURG KELLEY JONES	24	25 GEORGE ROBERTS
26 HARRY CANDELARIO	27 ERNIE CHAN DAN CARR CHRISTINE SLUSARZ	30 YEARS AGO: DOCTOR DOOM'S FIRST APPEARANCE IN F.F. #5 1962				